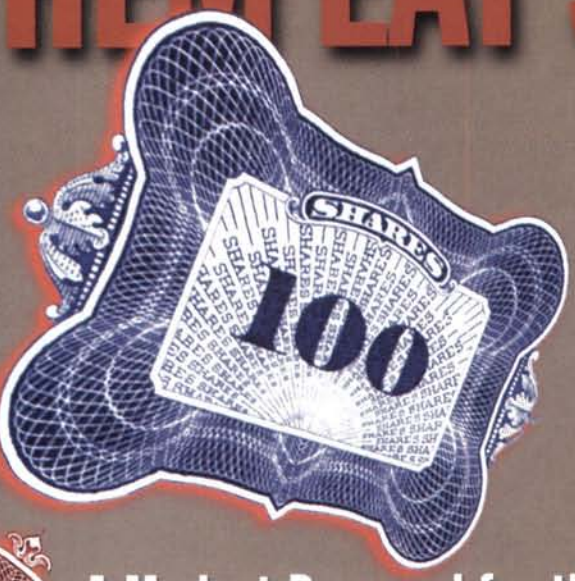
DANIEL GOLDHAGEN'S "ORDINARY GERMANS"—*OMER BARTOV*

APRIL 29, 1996 • $2.95

THE NEW REPUBLIC

LET THEM EAT STOCKS



A Modest Proposal for the Recently Downsized

by James Cramer

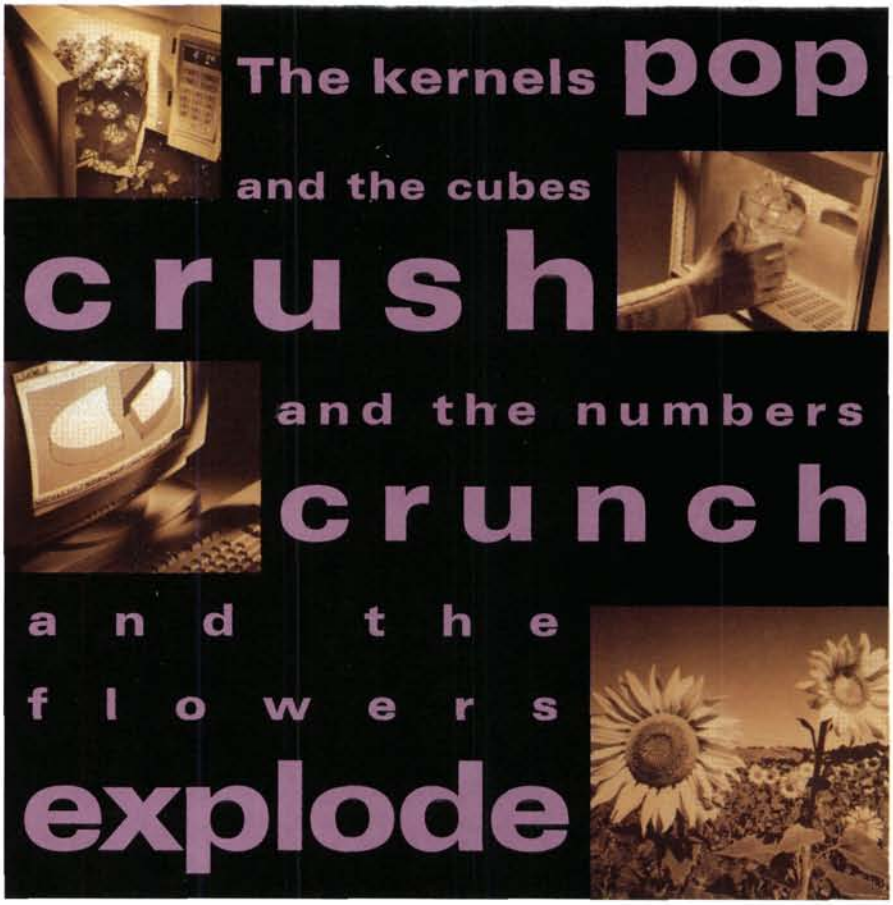
AMBASSADOR COLLEGE
HAMMER LIB

...stics, by Alex Heard

...tics, by David Berreby

..., by Stephanie Gutmann

LICENSED TO JNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Today's electric technologies make life much more comfortable and convenient. They make us more productive. And they do it all with minimal impact on the environment. It's all the result of using energy more efficiently. ■ For example, microwave ovens use 90% less energy than conventional ovens. New super efficient refrigerators use 30% less energy than even 1993 models. (Their refrigeration systems are also CFC-free.) New LCD desktop computers consume 85% less power than regular desktops. ■ With such high energy efficiency, technologies like these are helping to reduce energy use. Which helps safeguard the planet. ■ Clearly, today's efficient electric technologies are helping to make things better all around. By improving how we live. And where we live.

Electricity

The power to make life better

© Edison Electric Institute ,1996

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

APRIL 29, 1996

AMBASSADOR UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 4,241

PO Box 111
Big Sandy, TX 75755

Cover by Eric Baker for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Article on page 24.

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Cigarettes, Lutherans, the World Bank, &c.

6 **MATTHEW MILLER** TRB: ECON 2 Why I changed my mind on the minimum wage.

7 **THE EDITORS** OVERDOSE Clinton boosts the office of drug czar. Groan.

8 **NOTEBOOK** Popcorn as a natural resource, Scalia mouths off, &c.

10 **JOHN B. JUDIS** ON THE HILL: POOL SHARKS Why Kennedy-Kassebaum won't work.

11 **STEPHANIE GUTMANN** CONSUMED: FLUFFY HEAVEN The fad for fabulous fabric.

12 **ARTHUR ALLEN** NEWARK POSTCARD: WHACKED Christie Todd Whitman's takeover of New Jersey's inner-city schools gets mugged by reality.

14 **DAVID BERREBY** UP WITH PEOPLE The deaf were first. But leg-lengthening surgery and genetics have now put dwarves on the edge of identity politics.

19 **ALEX HEARD** MOMMIE DEAREST The Unabomber may want to destroy the world, but other enviros want to rebirth it. Meet a millennialist subculture.

22 **ROBERT D. KAPLAN** WAR AFTER PEACE A Middle East peace settlement won't stop the meltdown.

24 **JAMES CRAMER** LET THEM EAT STOCKS An anwer to the downsized's pain.

26 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: FOUND WANTING Another Vanya in *August*; a lesser Spike Lee in *Girl 6*.

27 **JED PERL** ON ART: AN UNKNOWN MASTERPIECE Jean Hélion's crowded, exuberant genius finally comes to New York.

32 **OMER BARTOV** ORDINARY MONSTERS *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen

36 **JORIE GRAHAM** POEM *Easter Morning Aubade*

38 **LAVINIA GREENLAW** ALL NOISY ON THE WESTERN FRONT *The Ghost Road* by Pat Barker

42 **MICHAEL LIND** NEW YORK DIARIST: SMEAR TACTICS

Editor-in-Chief and Chairman
MARTIN PERETZ

Editor
ANDREW SULLIVAN

Literary Editor
LEON WIESELTIER

Executive Editor
MARGARET TALBOT

Senior Editors
MATTHEW COOPER, ANN HULBERT, JOHN B. JUDIS, CHARLES LANE, MICHAEL LEWIS, MICHAEL LIND, JAMES WOOD, ROBERT WRIGHT

Managing Editor
PETER BEINART

Legal Affairs
JEFFREY ROSEN

Economics
MATTHEW MILLER

Films
STANLEY KAUFFMANN

Theater
ROBERT BRUSTEIN

Poetry
MARK STRAND

Dance
MINDY ALOFF

Photography
LUC SANTE

Art
JED PERL

New Republic Books (Basic Books)
PAUL GOLOB

Contributing Editors
FOUAD AJAMI, ELIOT A. COHEN, STANLEY CROUCH, JACOB HEILBRUNN, ANNA HUSARSKA, MICKEY KAUS, MICHAEL KINSLEY, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, VINT LAWRENCE, GLENN LOURY, DOUGLAS G. McGRATH, LOUIS MENAND, ROGER ROSENBLATT, MAGGIE SCARF, ROBERT SHAPIRO, RONALD STEEL, E.V. THAW, TOM TOLES, TATYANA TOLSTAYA, MICHAEL WALZER, JACOB WEISBERG, SEAN WILENTZ, ALAN WOLFE, C. VANN WOODWARD

Associate Editors
NADER MOUSAVIZADEH, HANNA ROSIN, RUTH SHALIT

Design Consultant
ERIC BAKER

Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY

Production Director
BRUCE STEINKE

Production Manager
HENRY RIGGS

Assistant Editors
DEBRA DUROCHER, JENNIFER BRADLEY

Literary Assistant
MELANIE REHAK

Reporter-Researchers
JONATHAN CHAIT, MICHAEL CROWLEY, STEPHEN GLASS, ELISSA SILVERMAN

President and Publisher
JOAN M. STAPLETON

Vice President
JAMES J. McCABE

Associate Publisher-Advertising
JENNIFER BARRETT

Controller
CHRISTINA R. BONIFER

Circulation Director
CECELIA M. STEPHENS

Marketing Manager
SHABNAM K. SHARMA

Advertising Manager
ASHLEY H. COOPER

Accounting Assistants
JACQUELYN M. McCULLOUGH
JEANNINE DINGMAN

Advertising Assistant
CLAIRE P. STERN

Circulation Assistant
CAROLYN BERRY

Back Issues and Reception
MARGO JOHNSON

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 214, Number 18, Issue 4,241, April 29, 1996. (Printed in the U.S. on April 10, 1996.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 8 & 15, July 15 & 22, Aug. 19 & 26, and Sept. 16 & 23, 1996) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic Advertising Sales Office (212) 702-4882. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling). © 1995 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Internet mail address: tnr@aol.com Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 602, Mount Morris, IL 61054. For subscription problems call 800-827-1289.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

Clearing the air

To the editors:

Jacob Weisberg ("Leaner, Cleaner Liberals," April 1) uses my work on tobacco to underscore that liberals need to relax when dealing with risk. Weisberg criticizes me because, he says, I have tried to "treat smokers as wards of the state" when I should have been trying to keep cigarettes away from kids and crafting reasonable restrictions on secondhand smoke.

Good advice, especially since I've spent the last three years advocating policies that would make it harder for kids to smoke (e.g., banning vending machines) and trying to devise a rational secondhand smoke policy. I've also led an investigation into the tobacco industry that is now paying important dividends. The truth about what the industry knew about nicotine addiction and how they manipulated nicotine content is finally being uncovered. I don't expect Weisberg to credit me for this effort, but I'd appreciate my work not being caricatured just so he can appear to be a reasonable, pragmatic liberal.

HENRY A. WAXMAN
Member of Congress,
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

It's curious that Jacob Weisberg cites federal mine safety regulation as the sort of "utopian" commitment bound to lead to disappointment in government.

In his new book, James Carville correctly points to the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) as a success story. Deaths in the coal mines have plummeted even as production has soared. Of course, this hasn't stopped congressional Republicans from seeking to gut the mine safety law and eliminate MSHA—presumably because the agency has worked itself out a job. Who are the utopians again?

JOHN F. COLWELL
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

Jacob Weisberg's leaner, cleaner liberalism sounds a heck of a lot like moderate conservatism to me, and I say three cheers for it! We archconservatives would be delighted to discuss with Weisberg the operational details of dismantling the nanny state, which he deplores and we (in our extremist fashion) despise. Let the great debate begin!

DENNIS BRENNEN
Palatine, Illinois

Birth defects

To the editors:

If Michael Lind is so concerned that a burgeoning population resulting from legal immigration is a drain on the economy ("Huddled Excesses," April 1), why does he neglect to address the corollary issue of reproduction by current U.S. natives (other than to lament legal immigrants' "higher-than-average birthrate")?

If we really are serious about restricting population growth, why not consider no longer paying people in this country—through tax incentives—to have unlimited numbers of children, and thus remove the incentives for an individual or couple to have children in numbers that promise to drain finite resources and prove detrimental to society's long-term interests? I propose that we consider a system whereby parents would receive a tax credit for each of their first two children but would receive no deduction for a third child. One deduction would then be eliminated for each of their fourth and fifth children, so parents with five children would receive no tax benefits therefrom. Each subsequent child would then result in an increasing tax surcharge.

The basic policy I propose would be more sensible and fairer than the current one; those who claim to be advocating the anti-immigration agenda solely for anticipated economic gains resulting from limiting population growth would improve their credibility by embracing such reasonable limits on the number of children we will pay current citizens to have. After all, even ignoring the non-economic factors, is the Jones's tenth—or even seventh or fourth—child really more beneficial to our economy than someone who longs to become a part of this country because of the freedom and work opportunities he or she perceives to exist here?

DAVID A. LEVENTHAL
Dix Hills, New York

To the editors:

Michael Lind's "Huddled Excesses" is a long-overdue tweaking of the American liberal conscience but is marred by a serious error. Lind describes the H-1B visa program as allowing "firms to pay only the foreign prevailing wage plus a living allowance." Not so. H-1B visas require that firms pay the U.S. domestic wage prevailing within the local geographic area of employment, i.e., the precise opposite of Lind's description. This leads, by the way, to some strange anomalies. For example, if universities or government agencies wish to bring in foreign scientists to participate in research projects, they must pay them locally prevailing industry wages, which usually tend to be higher, often much higher, than salaries paid to American scientists employed by the universities or agencies.

SHERMAN M. FUNK
Former Inspector General
U.S. State Department
Washington, D.C.

Screen saver

To the editors:

I was dismayed to read Stanley Kauffmann's "Hollywood Hustlers" (March 11), in which he mocks my company's software product Dramatica Pro. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and screenwriter David Obst wrote of Dramatica favorably in his 1995 *Wired* review. Magazines and journals such as *Writer's Digest, Creative Screenwriting, New York Screenwriter* and many more have consistently praised Dramatica's new theory of story for avoiding the pitfalls of formulaic writing—precisely the pitfalls of which Mr. Kauffmann unfairly accuses us.

I assume that Mr. Kauffmann examines motion pictures, books and plays prior to critiquing them. May I suggest that he extend a similar courtesy to a software product?

STEPHEN GREENFIELD
President, Screenplay Systems
Burbank, California

Silverado

To the editors:

In "Big Boy" (April 1), Matthew Cooper writes, "As for potential crimes, the Clintons, Stewart claims, hyped the value of the Whitewater property when they went to apply for a loan. If they did so knowingly, it would be a crime." Under no circumstances is overestimating the value of real property by an owner a crime. The crime is committed by the lender who is stupid enough to accept the owner's value without a professional appraisal. Overvalued real property was a ready source of funds for everyone during the Reagan/Bush years. That's how they converted Silverado to Eldorado.

CARL L. JOHNSON
Island Park, New York

Canon fodder

To the editors:

As a former divinity student who was raised in the Lutheran tradition and confirmed as a Roman Catholic, I must assist Andrew Sullivan and admonish reader Tim Furnish (Correspondence, April 15) on two points.

First, even in Lutheran theology—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

despite occasional rhetoric to the contrary—tradition is at least equal to Scripture in authority. In fact, Martin Luther questioned the authenticity of the Epistle of St. James and the Revelation of St. John because of what he believed to be their inconsistency with tradition—the standard against which the canonicity of all twenty-seven books that constitute the New Testament (and many early writings that do not) has been measured since the Council of Nicea in 325 AD.

Second, St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Chapter 1, deals with the sinfulness of multiple, casual sex partners, not of homosexuality in itself. When pressed, St. Paul goes so far as to say that even monogamous, heterosexual marriage is not the Christian ideal. In I Corinthians 7:38, St. Paul writes, "So ... he who marries his betrothed does well; and he who refrains from marriage will do better." Even the social "coercives" (how can they call themselves "conservative" when they ignore most Christian history between 33 AD and the First Great Awakening?) avoid a literal interpretation of this passage. In Protestant America, only the Shakers have believed—and lived—this scriptural teaching literally.

ROBERT A. HETTINGER
Seal Beach, California

Foreign affair

To the editors:

Near the end of Roger Cohen's review of David Owen's *Balkan Odyssey* ("Peace in His Time," March 11), he dismisses an Owen point about Muslim shelling of their own people by revealing Owen had quoted me, an officer, in Cohen's words, with "famously pro-Serb views."

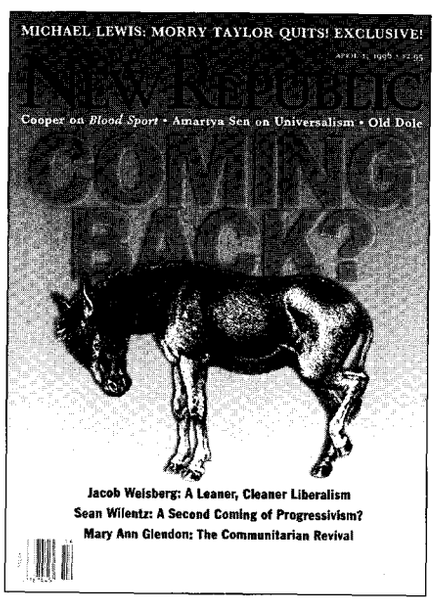
Since the views that made me famous, at least in Cohen's eyes, were set forth in the September-October issue of *Foreign Affairs*, it would be easy for anyone interested to verify if Cohen's description is accurate. I believe a fair reading of the article will produce no such conclusion.

What makes this otherwise throwaway point worth mentioning is its measuring utility for gauging the degree to which bias has gripped the American press in Bosnia. It seems that labeling as "pro-Serb" anyone willing to discuss unflattering characteristics of Muslim conduct in the war is all that is necessary to justify dismissal of the discussion.

One consequence of masking troublesome Muslim and Croat behavior is that it clouds perspective and makes an already horribly complex problem more so, and thus harder to solve. By denouncing the Serbs as the initiator of the conflict—at least this chapter of it—and therefore deserving of any extreme of vilification possible, the administration further reduced the likelihood of finding an enduring solution.

Serb behavior throughout the conflict has been vile. That has never been in question. The salient question is, or should be: Why are Serbs living outside Serbia so frightened of becoming a minority in a Muslim or Croat dominated state? Is their desire for self-determination less compelling than that of the Croats or Slovenes? How can we hope to help fashion an enduring peace unless we understand and address their fears along with those of other ethnic groups?

Richard Holbrooke came to understand this and, with the backing of a confused but compliant Washington, granted those concessions in the


MICHAEL LEWIS: MORRY TAYLOR QUITS! EXCLUSIVE!
NEW REPUBLIC
Cooper on *Blood Sport* • Amartya Sen on Universalism • Old Dole
COMING BACK?
Jacob Weisberg: A Leaner, Cleaner Liberalism
Sean Wilentz: A Second Coming of Progressivism?
Mary Ann Glendon: The Communitarian Revival

September 8 Geneva Accord that made Dayton possible, i.e., (1) formation of the Republica Srpska and (2) the right of the Bosnian Serbs to form alliances with neighboring states. If trying to work on the long-term problem makes one pro-Serb, I guess I, along with Holbrooke and Washington, stand guilty as charged.

CHARLES BOYD
Washington, D.C.

Old news

To the editors:

In your editorial "Is Dole Too Old?" (April 1) your actuarial information was misleading. The average 72-year-old white man may suffer a 27 percent risk of dying within five years, but more than health and gender must be considered. Those still in the work force, as is Senator Bob Dole, have a much greater longevity. In addition, statistics show that greater wealth correlates to a longer life.

Taking these characteristics into consideration, the average 73-year-old (the age that Dole would be if he takes office as president) has a 12.7 percent chance of dying within four years. This information was provided by the Actuarial Planning Group, Bellevue, Washington, using the Society of Actuaries 1983 annuity table. This still amounts to a greater than one in eight chance that, if elected president, Dole may not complete his term.

NICK LICATA
Seattle, Washington

To the editors:

Thanks to THE NEW REPUBLIC for adding yet another argument against the election of Shimon Peres as prime minister of Israel! To the list of complaints such as Peres's being soft on Yasir Arafat, making unilateral concessions to the Arabs and holding pie-in-the-sky beliefs of a new Middle East order, we can add the issue of his advanced age ("Is Dole Too Old?" April 1). Like Dole, Shimon Peres is 72. His opponent, Benjamin Netanyahu, is 46 years old, making him more youthful than President Clinton.

SETH COREY
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

One million and one men after

To the editors:

Because of the Leon Wieseltier article criticizing every aspect of Cornel West's work ("All and Nothing at All," March 6, 1995), we have decided to cancel our subscription to THE NEW REPUBLIC. The magazine is too important to take such a critical stance against a man of Cornel West's intellect. We hope you will do better in the future.

ELAINE R. WOLFENSOHN
New York, New York

The "We" referred to in the letter are Mr. and Mrs. James Wolfensohn. Mr. Wolfensohn is president of the World Bank.

False gods

To the editors:

In your April 1 issue Michael Lewis ("Losers") passes on without correction Pat Buchanan's inaccurate rending of several lines from Macaulay. Macaulay actually wrote, "Then out spoke brave Horatius, the Captain of the Gate, 'To every man upon this earth, death cometh soon or late, and how can man die better than facing fearful odds, for the ashes of his fathers and the temples of his gods.' "

JACK CUNNINGHAM
Toronto, Canada

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

Econ 2

I have a confession: I used to be against raising the minimum wage. Now, like those dreadful ex-smokers who crusade against the vice they only yesterday indulged in, I get mad at people who oppose lifting the minimum wage in my presence. How did I get here from there?

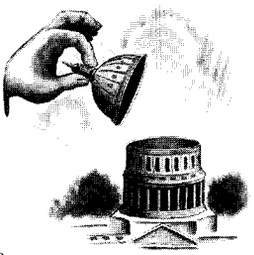
It's fall 1979. I've just arrived at college, and it's the first day of Econ 1. The professor, determined to whet our appetites with a taste of the truths reserved only for economists, announces that the minimum wage causes unemployment. Raising the price of labor, he explains, reduces employers' demand for it; many people who'd be willing to work for less than the legislated wage floor instead go jobless.

I was stunned. How could an unambiguously good thing like the minimum wage—which had sustained me as a busboy for four summers—have bad consequences? Clearly economics held innumerable secrets as to How Things Really Worked. I majored in it.

Soon I became one of those "don't-raise-the-minimum-wage, expand-the-Earned-Income-Tax-Credit instead" kind of guys. Maybe you've heard the argument. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) gives a rebate to the working poor designed to lift them above the poverty line. The idea is to give struggling families a wage supplement through the tax code rather than risk pricing them out of a job via the minimum wage. There are other pluses, too. Unlike the minimum wage, for example, the EITC goes only to those who need it. Why mandate a raise for teenage busboys from comfortable families (like me) when you really want to give hard-pressed breadwinners a lift? And, since the EITC isn't a burden on business, even Ronald Reagan and George Bush championed it.

But a funny thing happened in the 1980s while I was smugly taking this view. First, the wage stagnation that began in the 1970s got worse; for workers who didn't go beyond high school, incomes actually fell. As CEO pay at top companies multiplied obscenely from forty to 150 times the average worker's salary, the minimum wage, which went untouched from 1981 to 1989, lost nearly half its inflation-adjusted value. The EITC—which drains the federal budget and so can't be expanded indefinitely in an era of big deficits—wasn't plugging the gap. Even Clinton's big EITC expansion in 1993, the proudest achievement of his original economic plan, left most of the working poor taking home 20 percent less than the minimum wage had offered in the late 1970s.

In addition, a raft of new studies (only some done by lefties with an agenda) showed that my economics professor was right in theory but wrong in practice: the employment effects of modest hikes in the minimum wage appeared to be, well, minimal. Yes, there was a risk. But, in some states that raised the minimum wage above the federal floor, employment even increased.



Which brings us to today. Republicans have dug in their heels against raising the hourly minimum from $4.25 to $5.15. If job losses look trivial, and you're really worried about growing inequality, it's a no-brainer to say the GOP is dead wrong, like I was. But then I was seduced by a theory. Republicans have been seduced by something worse.

Consider: in 1989, when the minimum wage was last raised, from $3.35 to $4.25, George Bush and 80 percent of GOP legislators supported it. "I am not going to stand here," Bob Dole said during that debate, "and say you can live on $3.25 an hour or $4.55 an hour." Well, guess what? Adjusted for inflation, 1989's unlivable $3.35 is the equivalent of today's $4.25 minimum. Presumably Republicans feel the poor have gotten better at stretching every penny.

Of course, we can't expect Dole and his colleagues to be as scrappy as the average dishwasher, so it's only fair that while they've frozen the minimum wage they've raised their own salaries by a third since 1990, to $133,600. With the extra cash, every senator can now afford to hire three full-time minimum wage earners for work around the house; maybe, in a nod to job creation, they should be required to. That's the least they can do after their amazing attempt to gut the EITC itself last year, a breach of faith so shameless that Bill Archer tried to sell it as a cut in "corporate welfare."

In a season when Christians recall their duty to care for the least among us, and Jews are summoned to sympathize with the stranger in bondage, why are Republicans courting divine retribution on the minimum wage? Obviously, to make nice with business interests that fund their campaigns. Well, I don't expect they'll thank me, but I've found a way to save their souls.

While Republicans complain publicly that the minimum wage is a job-killer, privately their corporate pals gripe that it takes too much off the bottom line. Come off it. Let's say the 13 million Americans now earning $4.25 to $5.15 get a full ninety-cent raise; and that the 10 million more who earn $5.15 to $6.15 get a fifty-cent raise, too, lest some experienced busboy grouse that a rookie is unfairly making the same as he is (I'm still bitter). Add it up, and you get a wage hike of $33 billion a year, or about 6 percent of last year's corporate profits of $550 billion. Can you live with that?

Surely Bob Dole can. Next time Bob slips into his clingy running shorts and kicks back with Dwayne Andreas and the gang in Bal Harbour, here's what he says. If CEO compensation varies roughly with corporate profits, then a wage hike will take those salaries down a notch from today's politically explosive average of more than $2 million. Dole can tell the boys that six months from now the headlines will trumpet, "New Declines in CEO Pay." Not a bad sop to the masses. Full-time workers will get an $1,800 raise. And God will smile because if the minimum wage had been indexed to inflation (an idea whose time has come) the companies would never have had that $33 billion to begin with. Everybody wins.

Yes, neanderthals—like *The Washington Post*'s millionaire columnist James Glassman—will complain that Pharaoh could never have built the pyramids with these labor costs. Others will cry that the poor themselves may foot the bill, as McDonald's, for example, tries to pass along the wage hike via pricier Big Macs. But such arguments were ritually raised before the dozen minimum wage increases of the last forty years. They dissolved each time because the republic not only survived, but enjoyed growth in which, thanks partly to a decent wage floor, most Americans shared. From the 1950s through the 1970s, the minimum wage held steady at about half the average wage for nonsupervisory workers. At that benchmark, it should rise to 6 bucks today. So Republicans can vote for $5.15 and still boast of having kept the peasants with pitchforks at bay. Only they might want to do that in private.

MATTHEW MILLER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

APRIL 29, 1996

OVERDOSE

After a dramatic pause in his January State of the Union address, President Clinton introduced his new "drug czar," General Barry McCaffrey. Then, last month, he quadrupled the staff of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and requested an extra $3.4 million in funding. Congressional Republicans upped the ante with another half-million. Yup, it's an election year.

This latest "war on drugs" represents a case study in political pandering. It starts with an apparently unrelated pander: Clinton's 1992 campaign promise to cut the White House staff by 25 percent. He had no evidence that the staff needed to be cut by a quarter—or at all—but the line was such a zinger in stump speeches he felt he had to follow through. In office the president was shocked to discover that most of those good-for-nothing Beltway bureaucrats were necessary, after all. So he cut the ONDCP staff from 146 to twenty-five (the rest of the 25 percent cut came from contracting work out) and elevated the drug czar to Cabinet level to show he was tough on drugs.

So far, so good. The first drug czar was Bill Bennett in 1988, who conceived of the position (as he conceives of most things) as a largely rhetorical exercise. Many of the fired Bush staffers were political appointees in the Bennett mold, such as former Notre Dame basketball coach Digger Phelps, who at Dan Quayle's insistence was paid six figures to fulminate. Clinton then appointed as drug czar Lee Brown, a successful black police chief. Brown, a career cop, had neither the talent for rhetorical uplift nor the staff resources for serious law enforcement. So Clinton's main contribution was to change the office from a large collection of Republican cronies delivering inspirational speeches into a small collection of Democratic cronies delivering uninspirational speeches.

As a result, Republicans have accused him of abandoning the war on drugs. "He's reduced money for interdiction; he's reduced funds for drug enforcement," charged Bob Dole, who in the same speech offered a free lunch to anyone who "can name one thing that President Clinton has done to reduce the size of government." And what has Dole done to fight drugs? Well, the GOP Congress has proposed a cut in funding for drug education by 15 percent. Drug *education* is big government. Drug *enforcement* isn't.

Now Clinton has reversed his drug policy. That is to say, his need to appear tough on drugs currently supersedes his need to cut the White House staff by 25 percent. He's all set for the campaign. Whenever somebody asks him about drugs he can make two points: he's hired a general, and he's given him lots of money. Dole can't possibly outflank him; the military currently has no rank higher than general, and Clinton will match any bid to give him more funding.

This being an election year it's hard to expect national drug policy to be much more than a pander-a-thon. But maybe, after November, we can seriously rethink the drug czar position. Right now the position has two main administrative responsibilities. One is impossible, the other pointless. The impossible job is to coordinate the anti-drug efforts of the thousands of federal, state and local agencies that play a role. (The ONDCP itself spends less than 0.1 percent of the national anti-drug budget.) None of these agencies have separate drug budgets, so ONDCP can't do anything about what they spend or how they spend it. The Customs Department, for example, looks for all kinds of contraband and bad guys. How much does it "spend" looking for drugs? Who knows? About the most the drug czar has been able to do is prod these agencies to cook their books to show that they're spending more to fight drugs.

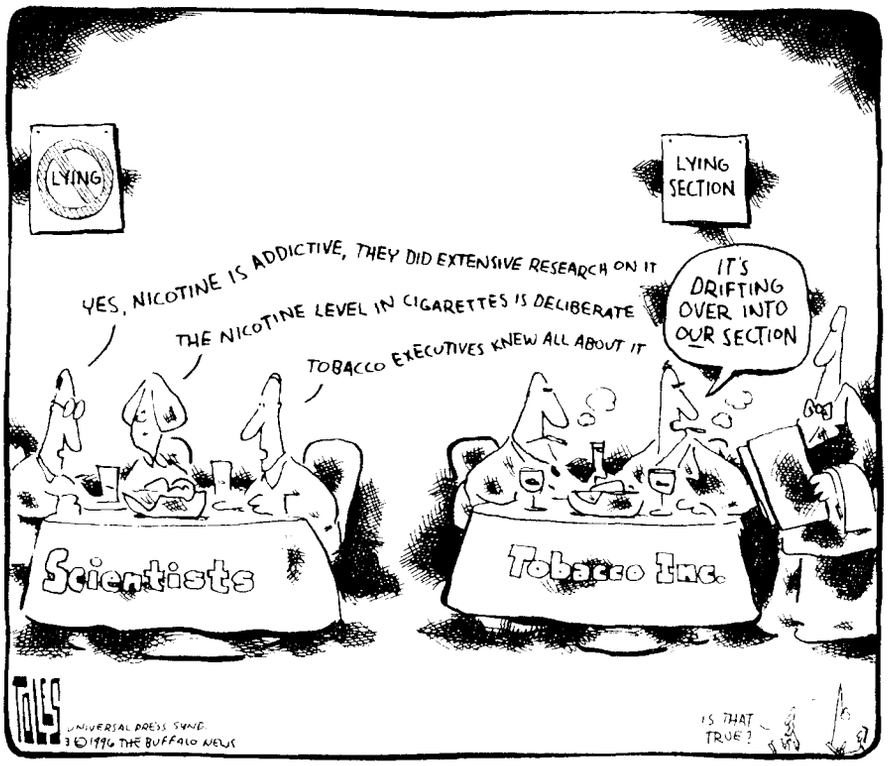
The pointless job is to prepare annual statistics on domestic drug use as a gauge of the president's effectiveness in fighting drugs. White House policy is one of the tiniest factors controlling drug use, and the little it *can* do—mainly education—requires years to take effect. Judging the president's drug policies by this year's drug statistics is like judging his environmental record by this year's global warming.

That leaves just one role for the drug czar: leading public opinion against drugs. Maybe McCaffrey is cut out for this duty. But giving him more money won't make the speeches better. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: Burger King ordered a Baltimore franchise to stop issuing coupons good for a free box of ammo with purchase of a gun at a local sporting goods store.... Marlon Brando told Larry King that "Hollywood is run by Jews. It is owned by Jews...." Rudolph Giuliani's administration is threatening to sell the Women's National Republican Club, claiming that the group has failed to pay $310,655 in property taxes.... A federal judge ruled that the jingle of Anabell's Ice Cream trucks in Glocester, Rhode Island, is protected by the First Amendment.... Speaking at a campaign kickoff for her husband, Senator John Kerry, Teresa Heinz offered, "if there is anything that I can do as a woman and as his wife to make his life richer, after twelve years of celibacy, I promise you I will." ... Senator Strom Thurmond, 93, announced his candidacy for an eighth term.



GRIEF STRICKEN: Where were the Republican expressions of condolence after Ron Brown's death last week? Just asking. Republican National Committee Chairman Haley Barbour's statement—"He did a tremendous job as chairman of the Democrat National Committee...."—even persisted in the juvenile partisan practice of dropping the "ic" from the Democratic Party's name. Dick Armey and Newt Gingrich didn't bother with the ritual of issuing statements of regret. No doubt they were too busy grieving the loss of an outstanding political opportunity: dismantling the Commerce Department. Majority Leader Dick Armey had spoken fondly of placing Brown's Cabinet chair in a museum as a trophy of the Republican revolution. (No matter that they planned to shift most of the programs run by Commerce elsewhere, thus saving few actual taxpayer dollars.) But to turn this partisan pique into silence after Brown's death is one indication that today's Republican Party is losing touch with its own sense of decency.

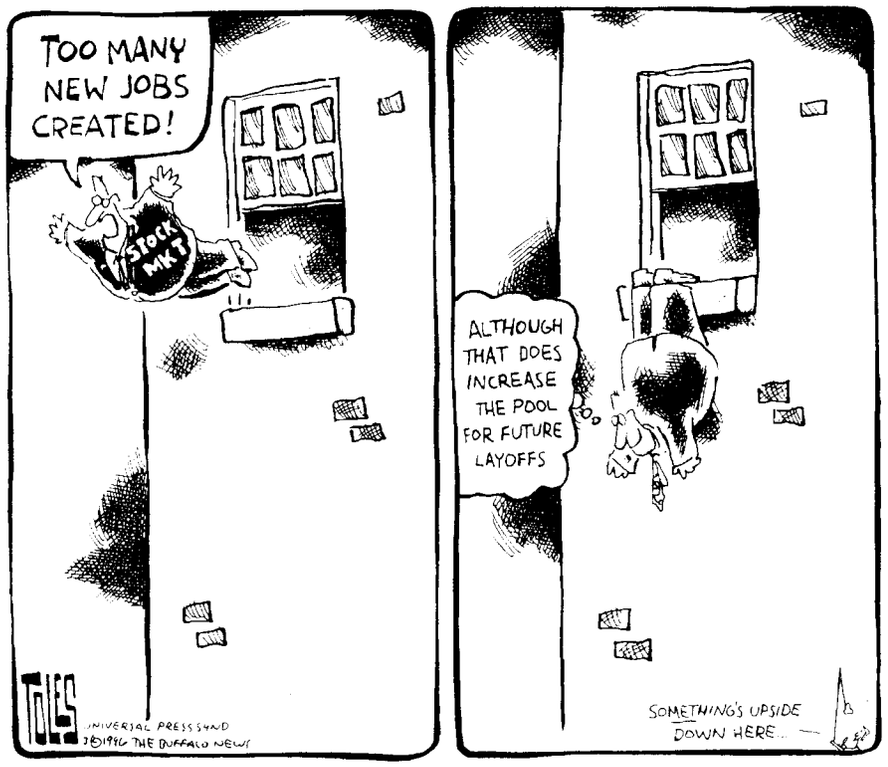
FAT FARM: Republicans touted their big Freedom to Farm bill, passed last month, as an effort to weed out special-interest agriculture. Uh-huh. A quick jaunt through the bill reveals that more than a few weeds remain standing, and a few new ones have been planted. After sheep-ranchers complained they were no longer receiving wool and mohair subsidies, the Republican leadership shepherded through a provision creating the National Sheep Industry Improvement Center. At a cost of $50 million, the center will provide loans, build plants and promote sheep and goat products. Other provisions include $20 million in grants for schools that provide farm education to Hispanics and $15 million to create sewage systems in Eskimo villages. Then there's the proliferation of boards the bill creates (The National Kiwifruit Board and National Canola and Rapeseed Board, for instance), most of which benefit tiny constituencies. How exactly does the anti-government party justify hiring kiwi bureaucrats? In case popcorn farmers feel left out, section 572 of the bill states, "Congress finds that popcorn is an important part of the human diet; the production and processing of popcorn plays a significant role in the economy of the United States...." Orville Redenbacher is looking down with a smile.

DUELING HYPOCRITES: The Clinton administration admits the president secretly turned a blind eye to Iranian arms shipments to Bosnia in early 1994, even while his administration was defending the arms embargo before Congress. Bob Dole, who led anti-embargo forces on the Hill, says it was "duplicitous" for Clinton to pursue "a policy in direct contradiction to its stated policy—without notifying the Congress." He's got a point. Dole's April 1994 legislation said that "neither the president nor any other member of the executive branch of the United States government shall interfere with the transfer of arms to the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina." Thus, by letting Iranian arms

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

slip through, Clinton was enacting Dole's policy—even as he denounced it as a threat to peace. He also stimulated the very Bosnian dependence on Iran that American troops are trying to undo today. But in raw pragmatic terms Clinton's clandestine move made the best of a bad situation. Any unilateral, overt effort by the U.S. to arm Bosnia would have caused an uproar among the European allies. That could have short-circuited the effort before it really got going, not to mention shattered the alliance. Letting the Iranians do our dirty work, though risky, preserved a crucial measure of plausible deniability. Dole has a right to complain about being cut out of the loop. But his ignorance—and his political embarrassment—is a small price to pay for getting help to Bosnia as cleverly, and effectively, as possible.

AMERICAN JUSTICE: *The Washington Post* is shocked to find a Supreme Court Justice talking about God. A breathless front-page story details Justice Antonin Scalia's speech to the First Baptist Church in Jackson, Mississippi, last Tuesday. In the speech, Scalia urged the congregation not to be swayed by secular critics, aiming barbed remarks at the cultural elite: "We must pray for the courage to endure the scorn of the sophisticated world.... The wise do not believe in the resurrection of the dead. It is really quite absurd.... So everything from the Easter morning to the Ascension had to be made up by the groveling enthusiasts as part of their plan to get martyred." We're pleased to see that Justice Scalia has gotten in touch with his anger, and we have no problem with a Supreme Court Justice expressing religious views. But there's something a little paranoid about his assertions that people of faith are beleaguered in American life. Scalia, for one, hasn't done so badly. And there's something more than a little vulgar in his self-expression. The authority of Justices has something to do with, well, judiciousness, and part of judiciousness is about tone, discretion and restraint. The next time someone dismisses one of Scalia's carefully argued decisions as the wish-fulfillment of a religious fanatic, Scalia will have himself partly to blame.


TOO MANY NEW JOBS CREATED!
STOCK MKT
TOLES
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYND
©1996 THE BUFFALO NEWS
ALTHOUGH THAT DOES INCREASE THE POOL FOR FUTURE LAYOFFS
SOMETHING'S UPSIDE DOWN HERE...

GRIDLOCK SET IN STONE: A small Washington parable. Although the Year of the Woman has come and gone, the sculptures in the Capitol Rotunda remain all male. Misogynist lawmakers scheming to maintain an exclusionary tradition? Nope, it's because women's groups are divided, fighting among themselves about which statue to honor. It started last year when the Senate voted unanimously to move a suffragist sculpture to the Rotunda: the thirteen-ton statue of Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton that's been on display in a ground-floor crypt for the past seventy-five years. The House, however, led by North Carolina Republican Sue Myrick, rejected the Senate proposal since hauling the "Portrait Monument" upstairs would cost nearly $100,000. (Another worry is that the statue is spectacularly ugly.) But things got complicated when Virginia Senator John Warner and several women's groups ignored the House and began raising private donations to move the suffragists. The battle intensified last week when Republicans Nancy Johnson and Barbara Vucanovich joined with different women's groups to propose moving a lighter statue of a Wyoming suffragist to the Rotunda. Esther Hobart Morris forced Wyoming to become the first state to give women the vote. So far, stalemate. While the two sides met last week, staffers say they remain hopelessly deadlocked, meaning women will remain absent for the foreseeable future.

THOSE CRAZY COLORADANS:

Christians in Colorado begin Holy Week with Palm Sunday

—*The Rocky Mountain News*, April 1.
(Thanks to Maurice Holt of Denver, Colorado.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ON THE HILL

POOL SHARKS

By John B. Judis

Everybody loves the Kassebaum-Kennedy health care bill, don't they? It even brought out a chorus of cooing from the notoriously cantankerous editors of this magazine. In his State of the Union, Bill Clinton got in on the bipartisan love-in. He urged Congress to pass "the bipartisan bill sponsored by Senator Kennedy and Senator Kassebaum that would require insurance companies to stop dropping people when they switch jobs and stop denying coverage for pre-existing conditions." It's been endorsed by everyone from Utah's Orrin Hatch on the right to Minnesota's Paul Wellstone on the left.

On March 28, the House passed a rival version of the bill—weighed down by special-interest provisions, including deductions for Medical Savings Accounts (a gift to Republican donor J. Patrick Rooney's Golden Rule Insurance Co.) and regulation exemptions for small-business insurance pools (a favor to the National Federation of Independent Business). But the tawdriness of the House bill has only made the Senate version look even rosier. Kassebaum and Kennedy's legislation, which already has fifty-six sponsors, is expected to pass easily when the Senate considers it later this month.

Well, sorry to say, something is wrong with this perfect piece of legislation. In their enthusiasm, the bill's bipartisan backers have not looked closely at how it works. They haven't examined whether it can really accomplish what Kassebaum and Kennedy promise. Yes, the Senate as well the House bill would protect individuals who go from one job, where they are insured, to another, where they would be insured by a different company; the new insurance company couldn't deny them coverage because of a pre-existing condition. Though some states already prohibit this, making it national law is worthwhile.

But Kassebaum and Kennedy also claim their bill protects people who lose their insurance after leaving a job and either remain unemployed or go to work for a business that does not provide health insurance. Under the bill, Kennedy said, "Any employees losing group coverage because they leave their job or for any other reason would be guaranteed the right to buy an individual policy." That statement, echoed by other supporters of the bill, is at best misleading and at worst false.

First of all, neither the House nor the Senate bill caps the premiums insurers can charge individuals who leave their jobs. Those with pre-existing conditions could pay premiums double or triple the average. Even the *Investor's Business Daily*, hardly a voice of reform, has remarked that this undercuts the bills' claims: "[W]ithout rate controls, this guarantee [of insurability] becomes a hollow one: What unemployed person could afford a policy costing $10,000 or more a year?"

Secondly, both the Senate and House sponsors have left a loophole in their bills to allow private insurers to evade their responsibility for insuring individuals with pre-existing conditions. Both the House and Senate versions allow states to meet the bills' requirement for insuring individuals by setting up "high-risk pools." Private insurers could then direct somebody with a heart condition or a history of cancer to buy insurance from these government-run pools. But twenty-six states already have such pools, and they're failures.

Though they've been around since 1976, state high-risk pools still enroll only about 100,000 people. They offer restricted forms of insurance at an extremely high price. Only two states have low-income assistance. Others have put caps on their premiums, but, as costs have mounted and deficits expanded, they have raised these caps dramatically. In 1991, Florida increased its premiums for high-risk consumers to 250 percent of the premium for average-risk consumers. That could mean family premiums as high as $15,000 a year. Other states have restricted coverage. California won't pay annual expenses over $50,000.

The pools are bogs of fiscal insolvency. By definition, they attract a less healthy population than private insurance. This jacks up costs, which increases pressure to raise premiums, and drives out those who can't afford them. A Florida survey found that 43 percent of those who had left the state plan no longer had any insurance. Proposals to break this vicious spiral by subsidizing the pools through new taxes or assessments on private insurers have met with stiff political resistance.

To their credit, Kassebaum and Kennedy initially grappled with these problems. In the bill's first version, introduced last July, they stipulated that, in order to win exemption from the rules requiring private insurance to cover pre-existing conditions, states would have to get their high-risk pool approved by the Department of Health and Human Services. Among other things, the states would have to demonstrate that their pools provide "guaranteed access to affordable coverage." But, under pressure from private insurers, Kassebaum and Kennedy last month weakened these provisions.

As the *National Underwriter* reported, Kassebaum and Kennedy amended their bill to gain the support of the Independent Insurance Agents of America. When the bill comes up this month, they will present an amendment that would redefine "affordable" health insurance—not as "the relationship between premiums and the income of potential purchasers" but as "a comparison of the cost of coverage under a state program versus the cost in the absence of a program." In other words,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"affordable" will be defined as what is affordable to the insurer. The House version does even more to help private insurers shrug off individuals with pre-existing conditions. It sets no standards for state pools to meet. The word "affordable" does not even appear in the bill. And, like Kassebaum-Kennedy, it doesn't cap premiums.

Entranced by the magic of their bipartisan goodwill, the bill's supporters have become curiously oblivious to its limitations. When the insurance lobby argued that requiring coverage of health risks would cause average rates to rise, Kassebaum and Kennedy issued a statement claiming that their reforms "would have a minimal impact on individual insurance market rates." They cited a study by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) and the Hay Group. But that study was based on the assumption that, instead of raising rates across the board to accommodate high-risk individuals, insurance companies would charge them as much as 200 percent more. If the insurance companies did this, the study found, the reforms would raise average rates only 1 to 3 percent. By the same assumptions, however, the so-called reforms would make a mockery of guaranteeing high-risk individuals "the right to buy an individual policy."

The Kassebaum-Kennedy bill has been celebrated as the kind of simple, incremental reform the Clinton administration should have attempted in the first place. But there was a reason the Clinton bill was so complicated. Health care finance and delivery is a web of extraordinarily intricate relations where progress in one area can easily lead to regression in another. Kassebaum-Kennedy does make improvements in one very narrow area, but, in claiming to do more, it nourishes illusions about the ease of reform. Kennedy-Kassebaum is the Brady bill of health care reform. It stands for change, but does very little to bring it about. •

CONSUMED

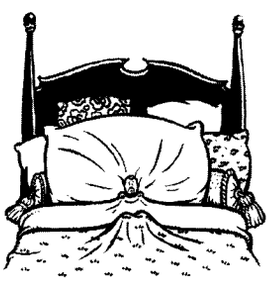
FLUFFY HEAVEN

By Stephanie Gutmann

In the '80s much was made by the semiologists of lifestyle about the strange proliferation of the obscenely huge, warm (warm was a big sales point), gooey, chocolate-chip cookie. Around 1985 or thereabouts, tiny but powerful storefronts dispensing these allurements seemed to have sprung up overnight on every city block and in every mall. As a clever kind of extra advertising, most outlets had the capacity to pump out an astounding amount of seductive cookie scent; it wafted down city streets like a siren call, whispering "regress with me" to all the overworked, stressed-out double-income baby-boomers dutifully on their way to the office.

Finally, the pundits came up with a plausible explanation of What It All Meant: boomers—coming of age in a less prosperous time than their parents—were beginning to feel the first intimations of "diminished expectations" and were thus acting hedonistic and irresponsible and wild by spending $1—it seemed an incredible price at the time—on a cookie, a way of poulticing themselves with a luxury they could afford—unlike, say, a house and yard.

A nice warm cookie was a sufficient narcotic in the '80s, but now that cranky, disappointed generation needs stronger stuff. The kick sought has to be bigger, more enveloping, more pneumatic. With baby-boomers older, achier and buffeted by an ever more intrusive cacophony of information and choice, going back to mom's kitchen isn't enough anymore. Thus the fabric fanatics. Boomers are blowing the disposable part of their stagnating incomes on 300-thread-count Egyptian cotton sheets and suffocating arrays of bolsters and pillows and retreating to old-fashioned "sleigh" beds—with an aromatherapy bath beforehand if they're feeling especially energetic.



If enthusiasm for Cuisinarts and raspberry vinegars was "cocooning," the current near-fetishistic interest in "draping everything in fabric," as one interior decorator puts it, and trading in the slab-like, projectile Danish modern sleeping plank for a nest of curtains, canopies, bed ruffles and bolsters is hyper-cocooning, perhaps the last cocooning stage. After all, once you've pulled on your cashmere jammies (from "Chambers"), fired up the aromatherapy candles, cued the Enya tapes, crawled into the Pottery Barn Sleigh Bed with its towering head- and footboards, pulled the 300-thread-count pure Egyptian cotton sheets up to your nose, fussed a little with the Welsh Tapestry Wool Coverlet, the supersized High Loft European goose down comforter and the satin bolsters and switched on the Itty-Bitty Booklight, what else are you going to spend money on? "Paradise Found" trumpets the cover of the Spring '96 *Bedroom and Bath* magazine, a speciality publication from Better Homes and Gardens.

"People are spending more time at home enhancing their home as fortresses or places of real comfort against the outside world, and part of that is the trend toward beautiful beds and beautiful baths," says Kathy Corey, the San Diego co-author of a book titled *Rituals for the Bath.* Trips around the country promoting the book have convinced her that Americans are in the midst of a "spiritual reawakening," with its centerpiece what she calls "the church of the bath."

What better symbol of America's retreat from the perimeter than the story of The Sharper Image? The company, known as a purveyor of chrome and steel

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bachelor-pad techno gizmos, responded to the zeitgeist a few years ago by launching a line of bath accessories and fitness products with a catalog titled "Sharper Image Healthy Living." "There has been a big proliferation of consumers who've had enough of outward things in their lives, and now they're worried about their home," explains senior vice president for marketing Sydney Klevatt. When focus groups intimated that the name sounded hair-shirty, Sharper Image changed the catalog name to the more sybaritic "Spa." With the addition of even more sybaritic products like bath oils, the "Spa" catalog has become so successful that it has spun off four stores featuring the same merchandise. Sharper Image has just launched yet another catalog line, which Klevatt describes as "sheets, beds—a continuation of the same theme."

He is only part of a mighty wave of would-be Christos out to drape and swaddle America: in the past five years Banana Republic, The Gap, Victoria's Secret, Calvin Klein, Guess, Christian LaCroix, French Connection and Liz Claiborne have all added bath and/or bedding lines. In 1992 a huge emporium called Bed, Bath and Beyond opened in Manhattan and did runaway business with Manhattanites. But Bed, Bath and Beyond is only the mid-range. For people who don't mind spending $8 on a bar of soap and $250 on a single sheet, there is a tri-state chain called Portico Bed and Bath. To scoop up everyone else, the megalithic Limited Company opened its own chain of Bath and Body Works, apparently as a lower-priced alternative to the British-based Body Shop chain, which began to infiltrate the United States in the early '90s. Bath and Body Works has tripled profits since the first stores opened in 1990.

For those too freaked or tired to brave the mall, there are always catalogs. "Chambers," published by the Williams Sonoma/Pottery Barn company is perhaps the best known for its upscale production values (as if shot and designed by Martin Scorsese in his *Age of Innocence* mode) and for its delirious fever dreams of heated towel racks and "cork-sealed terra cotta flagons of ... silken bath lotion formulated with the refreshing oils of Mediterranean citrus groves." "Chambers" is pricey, so other catalogs attempting to locate the same vein have been popping up all along the price spectrum. There is "The Company Store" (it has middle-spectrum prices but still assumes its customer knows his thread count from his fill power). "Garnet Hill," another glossy bedding catalog, is similar to "Chambers" in quality but more virtuous, tapping into the same distaste for the outside world but expressing it via chemical phobia, with ad copy making abundant use of the words "pure," "untreated," "chemical free," "simplicity" and "natural." "Land's End Coming Home" is a new mainstream contender from the stolid Midwest jean and sweater company.

If you still have any doubts that it's happening and what it's about, a radio spot for Ikea home furnishings is a snapshot of the phenomenon. It starts with a young man moaning about his stressed-out, downsized, overly competitive life and his inability to afford a Caribbean vacation. After fretting like this for a while, he ends the spot by brightening and concluding that he and his wife will concentrate on making their home "an oasis" instead. Happy bedding.

STEPHANIE GUTMANN is a New York writer.

NEWARK POSTCARD

WHACKED

By Arthur Allen

Two years ago, the manager of the smack motel on the corner across from Barringer Preparatory School in Newark warned Principal John Petrozzino that he'd better stop calling the police. "He said he was gonna whack me for trying to ruin his business, but two days later another dealer whacked him instead," Petrozzino says. "Right there on the corner."

The heroin emporium is back in business, but Petrozzino has a different worry these days. It's no longer a drug lord gunning for his head but the new state-appointed superintendent of schools. Beverly L. Hall, a twenty-five-year veteran of New York City education who last July brought a gleaming reputation to New Jersey's largest school district, intends to dismiss about a third of the Newark school principals. Petrozzino is said to be on her hit list. "We're going to grind him down, grind him down like ground beef," says one of Hall's aides.

Perhaps it's inevitable that, in the weary urban war zones of northern New Jersey, even school reform is framed in goodfellas language. State administrators now represent the Untouchables. They have entered the three largest New Jersey cities on a mission to slash graft and mismanagement. The 1989 takeover of Jersey City was the first in the nation, followed by takeovers in nearby Paterson, East St. Louis, Cleveland and now Newark—each an emergency measure to stop the downward spiral of inner-city schools.

But these state takeovers, motivated by mixtures of altruism and politics, are less a cure for the crisis in public education than a symptom of it. By the time states get around to taking over school districts like Newark's, it's probably too late to turn them around, at

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

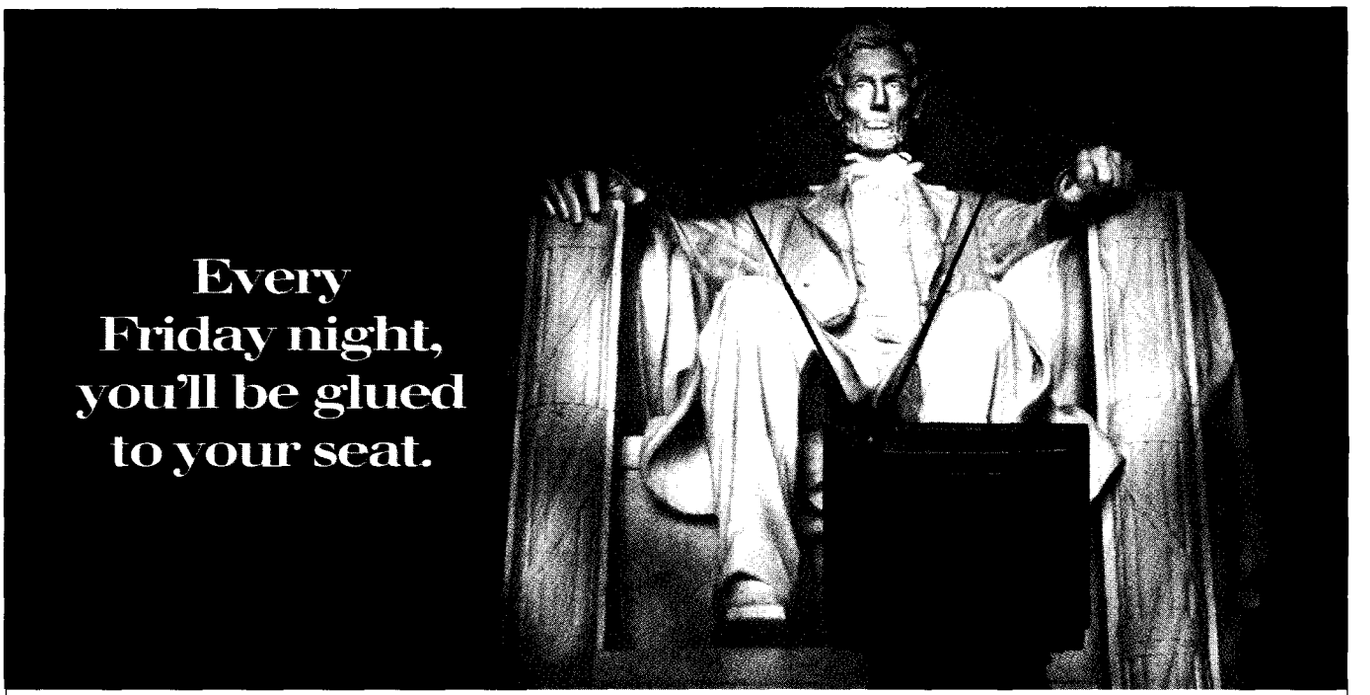
least without grand infusions of cash—as if. In Jersey City and in Paterson, taken over in 1991, the worst financial mismanagement has ended, but test scores have not yet improved. The Jersey City operation was to have ended after five years. Now state officials say it could last a decade or more.

New Jersey Governor Christie Todd Whitman has argued that she had no choice but to move into Newark's violence-plagued, crumbling schools, which had a dropout rate of 50 percent and only a fraction of the students performing at grade level. The takeover also offered a chance for Whitman, who has cut the state income tax 30 percent since taking office in 1994, to bolster her contention that better management rather than more money was key to making public schools work.

It will be hard to make that educational theory (or any educational theory, for that matter) work in Newark. To kickstart the takeover, the state coughed up $8 million last summer for a two-month cleanup. Brigades of workers descended on the eighty-two schools to paint graffiti-covered walls, cut chains off fire doors and plant flowerbeds. Whitman got herself photo-opped in a painter's cap. But the new money won't last. Hall's revamp of the Newark schools will mainly be funded by trimming the central office. She has brought in teams of assessors as well as fifty private tutors to help raise the standardized test scores of marginal students. A former deputy superintendent in New York who made her reputation cleaning up disorderly, corruption-plagued schools in Queens and Brooklyn, Hall seems perfect for the task. "When I heard about this job I felt my whole career had been preparing for it," she says.

But it will take a Herculean effort to turn Newark's schools into safe, functioning institutions. In the list of American cities over 200,000, the city is in the top four in infant mortality (19.1 per 1,000), unemployment (13 percent), one-parent households (50 percent), families on welfare (22.2 percent) and population flight (it shrank 19 percent from 1980 to 1992, to about 235,000). City Hall slumps under the weight of an interminable federal corruption probe that recently led to the indictment of Mayor Sharpe James's chief aide and the replacement of his police chief. Much of Newark still shows the scars of the 1967 riots: vast tracts of boarded up houses and vacant lots abut grimy public housing, fast-food joints and barricaded liquor stores. How many other American cities would permit a huge shooting gallery like the one whose manager threatened principal Petrozzino to operate next door to a school for five years? "This is an amazing place," concedes Hall, "requiring amazing grace."

Surprisingly, racial politics have not been a factor in the white Republican administration's takeover. Fed up with decades of neglect by the Newark political establishment, black parents mostly welcomed Jamaica-born Hall. But Hall's guns-a-blazing entry has alienated the teachers' union, which initially supported the takeover. Shortly after her arrival Hall announced she would dismiss principals and vice principals who weren't effective. The new recruits would be instructed



It's television to sit still for. Join moderator Ken Bode and Washington's most savvy reporters as they examine the compelling issues of our day. Watch Washington Week in Review Friday evenings on PBS.

WASHINGTON WEEK IN REVIEW

Seven days in 30 minutes.

A Production of WETA WASHINGTON, D.C.

Ford Funded by Ford Motor Co. At Ford, Quality Is Job One.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to carefully monitor teacher performance and get rid of deadwood. "I strongly believe that everything else hinges on having good leadership, and I think Newark children deserve the very best we can find," Hall says. It's an admirable sentiment, but it's made teachers and administrators edgy.

Morale problems are already evident at Barringer Prep, an all-ninth-grade school that ranks among the city's worst. State inspections found inadequate textbooks and broken computers, locked fire doors and classes held in a crowded basement cafeteria, trash-strewn floors and two functioning bathrooms for 786 students. Raw sewage was being pumped from the basement into the street. When the examiners asked principal Petrozzino for an explanation, he was quoted as saying, "Well, this is Newark." Yet Petrozzino and his staff feel they are being held accountable for matters beyond their control. Fire doors were locked because the alternative was to allow drug dealers easy access to the school. Classes were held in the cafeteria because of overcrowding. As for the sewage, it couldn't have made the neighborhood that much worse. "People have no idea how hard we've had to work over the years just to keep this district together," said Petrozzino, who grew up down the block. "Every one of us could have left in a heartbeat, but we chose to stay."

Besides, say teachers and principals, the level of violence in Newark schools mocks attempts at reform. During a recent two-week period, an elementary school principal was beaten up by high-school students, a girl's hair was set on fire by a classmate, and a student slashed another girl with a box cutter, opening cuts in her face that required 500 stitches. Conditions have reportedly worsened this year because Hall has suspended rules that allowed teachers to transfer disruptive children quickly to special schools. The "knuckleheads" can make mischief without being expelled. "Whether my students are going to get their faces slashed is much more important to them than *Romeo and Juliet*, which we're reading at the moment," says John Abeigon, a 38-year-old English teacher at Weequahic High School. He and other teachers feel that, in the rush to judge them, Hall's administration is overlooking the more basic problem of student discipline. Says Abeigon: "One of my students threatened to kill me the other day, OK? My department chair immediately blamed me for poor classroom management. They'll look for every problem except the obvious one, which is a complete collapse of morals in society, which you see reflected in these kids."

Educational reform *has* produced success stories in recent years. Problem is, most were under conditions totally unlike the Newark takeover. A much-celebrated improvement has occurred in Union City, a densely populated Hispanic town on the New Jersey side of the Lincoln Tunnel. In 1989, with the threat of takeover looming, Union City embarked on an ambitious program to remake its twelve schools. With a $27 million bond issue and a major infusion of funds from the Quality Education Act (a tax that angered New Jerseyans so much they voted out Governor Jim Florio in favor of Whitman in 1993), Union City Superintendent Thomas Highton refurbished buildings, bought equipment and redid curricula and school management with models provided by education theorists like Theodore Sizer and James Comer. Bell Atlantic chose Union City as the test site for a multi-million-dollar communications system that links school administrators, teachers and parents by e-mail. The overhaul has been so successful at improving attendance and raising test scores that President Clinton chose the city's Christopher Columbus Middle School to make his February 15 announcement of a federal computer-literacy program.

But Union City had two advantages over Newark: cash and community initiative. Between 1989 and 1994, Union City's annual budget increased from $42 million to $77 million, not including Bell Atlantic's contribution. "We had a lot of ideas," says Highton, "but we couldn't have done it without the money."

Secondly, change in Union City was motivated from within the community. It was the fear of state control that led Union City teachers, parents and administrators to join in the makeover. Rather than lopping off heads, Union City officials enrolled their teachers and administrators in retraining programs and permitted each school to decide what to do with a chunk of its budget. In Newark, even teachers sympathetic to Hall feel they're pawns in an experiment being carried out on behalf of the bureaucracy in Trenton. Republican Governor Whitman, hailed as an apostle of decentralization, in Newark has adopted the kind of top-down social experiment for which her party used to trash Democrats. And it's a miserly paternalism at that.

ARTHUR ALLEN covered Newark for The Associated Press during 1995.

Dwarves meet identity politics.

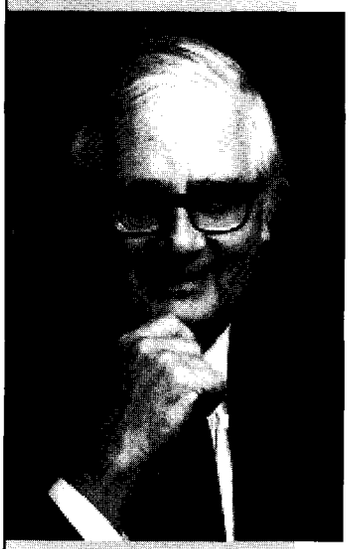
UP WITH PEOPLE

By David Berreby

Identity politics has been good for people with disabilities. For fending off prejudice, finding community and organizing politically to win things like universal wheelchair access and an accessible cash machine, the rhetoric of pride and rights makes sense. But insisting that deafness, for example, is an identity rather than a disability leads to political and cultural conflicts other communities don't face. After all, nobody tries to cure women of being female, and only a few cranks are still working on homosexuality. Genetics and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FAIR TRADE AND HARMONIZATION



Prerequisites for Free Trade?
Volume 1: Economic Analysis
Volume 2: Legal Analysis

edited by Jagdish N. Bhagwati and Robert E. Hudec

Jagdish Bhagwati, whom *The Financial Times* has called "the doyen of economists working on international trade," and Robert Hudec, the world-renowned scholar on international trade law, lead a team of outstanding economists and lawyers to offer a pioneering analysis of the harmonization demands that occupy center stage now on the world trade agenda.

"...a **rare achievement** which deserves proper acknowledgement."
— Arthur Dunkel, Director General, GATT (1980-1993)

"In this **remarkable** two volume work, **a dazzling assembly** of economic and legal scholars have struggled with some of the most perplexing international trade policy problems. This work will be an **indispensable** point of departure for further scholarship."
— John H. Jackson, University of Michigan

"**[P]athbreaking volumes**...for years to come, both scholars and policy makers will be turning to these papers for guidance on the most important policy issues on the new trade agenda."
— Robert Z. Lawrence, Harvard University

"...**one-stop shopping** for those who need to come up to speed on the thorniest of emerging trade issues."
— Peter Passell, *The New York Times*

"These volumes provide a **sophisticated** economic and legal analysis of major post-Uruguay Round trade issues."
— Kenneth W. Dam, University of Chicago,
and Deputy Secretary of State, 1982-1985

"These two volumes are **extremely well-written**. They provide valuable insights into the 'trade and' agenda, whether the environment, labor, or competition policy. Everyone interested in trade will benefit from the **comprehensive treatment** presented here."
— Carla A. Hills, U.S. Trade Representative, 1989-1993

"...should become **mandatory reading** for policymakers, academics and students all over the world."
— Ernst-Ulrich Petersmann, Legal Adviser, WTO

"Only the combined **expertise and vision** of Bhagwati and Hudec could have produced this comprehensive treatment of all the key issues."
— Sylvia Ostry, Canadian Ambassador for
Multilateral Trade Negotiations, 1984-1988

Volume 1: 608 pp. $60.00 • Volume 2: 460 pp. $60.00

To order call toll-free **1-800-356-0343** (US & Canada) or (617) 625-8569. Prices higher outside the U.S. and subject to change without notice.

The MIT Press

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

medical technology are, however, gaining on disabilities. Is deafness an identity that needs protecting from doctors? Who gets to say so? To these contentious questions, another is now being added: Should dwarves be accepted or made taller? Is dwarfism a defect or a destiny?

About one birth in 10,000 in this country results in a baby with dwarfism, who will grow up with exceptionally short limbs (dwarves don't reach an adult height taller than 4'6"), though often with an average-size head and torso. A variety of medical complications can result from the condition, such as bowed legs, ear problems and spinal curvature. Most dwarves, however, are perfectly able to function normally with these conditions, and we have belatedly begun to overcome the stereotypes they once invoked. Little people, to use the correct term, were commonly shuffled off into entertainment (remember the munchkins? the endearing Australian sport of dwarf-tossing?), or relegated to a life of isolation. "Dropping out of school because they couldn't take the ridicule from the other kids, never learning to drive, living with their families and babysitting for their sister, that kind of life," says Ruth Ricker, a technical assistance specialist for the federal Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights in Boston. Though most dwarves score no differently than other people on intelligence tests, some were shunted into institutions for the retarded.

A group of people, in other words, ripe for the benefits of solidarity. A dwarfed actor named Billy Barty saw that prospect and in 1957 founded the Little People of America, which has now grown into a nationwide organization of some 5,000 families. The LPA sponsors monthly meetings of its fifty chapters and a week-long national convention, publishes a newsletter and maintains an Internet bulletin board. The group helps dwarfed couples adopt babies (some average-height couples give up dwarfed children) and provides psychological and social counseling.

But the LPA is also a political and cultural organization, the NAACP or NOW of little people. "We work to change building codes, for instance," explains Angela Muir Van Etten, a lawyer and LPA activist in Rochester, New York. "We request ATMs, pay phones, elevator buttons that can be reached by little people." The annual convention includes dances, talent shows, athletic events—the trappings not of a hospital but a community. The group's mission statement speaks of assistance and guidance for little people, but also of "peer support" and "personal example," and of networking to "enhance knowledge and support of short statured individuals."

LPA activists know the rhetoric of identity. "If there were a magic pill that would make me wake up tomorrow and be tall, I would not take it," says Robert Van Etten, an engineer who is married to Angela Muir Van Etten. "Height has made me what I am." They even have their heroes culled from history. "You know who was a dwarf, although we don't like to talk about it?" Barty told *The Los Angeles Times* in 1994. "Attila the Hun."

Some 80 percent of dwarves are born to parents who are of what the movement carefully calls "average" height. So membership in the LPA was a lifeline for many people who, like many deaf people and many gay people, were alone in their families. "I joined when I was 6. Knowing all these adults as role models my whole life certainly helped me," says Ricker, now, in her 30s, the president of the LPA.

Four decades of activism seem to have worked. "In the 1950s, most of our people were in entertainment," Ricker tells me. "A lot were not educated." Now, parents are less likely to send a dwarf child off to classes for the retarded. Dwarves are far more likely to be lawyers, engineers and other white-collar sorts. And, if mainstream America isn't yet saying "little person" the way it knows to say "African American," dwarf-friendly plots have made it into the recent film *Living in Oblivion* and onto episodes of TV shows as distinct as "Baywatch" and "Seinfeld." "There's a lot of people in LPA who don't consider short stature a disability," Ricker declares.

But, she adds, only some 10 percent of the country's little people are in the organization, and there are many who still grow up in isolation, treated like freaks or morons. The Human Growth Foundation, an organization for families with children, cites studies showing that shorter people are literally not given as much space as others: people stand closer to them than they do to taller people. A study published in the *Journal of Pediatrics* in 1990 reported that men over six-feet earn starting salaries 12 percent higher than shorter men. A study by Linda Jackson and Kelly Ervin of Michigan State found that people rate tall men more attractive, accomplished, fit and masculine than short men. They rate tall women as being higher-class and more physically attractive than short women. These prejudices against short people are redoubled in the experience of dwarves, who are even shorter and who look different. "The reason little people have so many problems is not size," says Angela Muir Van Etten. "You can deal with the physical aspects. The hardest thing is people's attitudes. You can go out and get yourself an education and prepare yourself for the job market and find people who won't hire you."

So activism has given little people the same kinds of choices faced by members of other groups—assimilation or insistence on one's difference. Do you militantly insist on difference and demand your place at the table ("we're queer, we're here, get used to it"), or do you stress the common ground ("hath not a Jew eyes? If you prick us, do we not bleed?")? But this choice—once theoretical—has suddenly become real. Advances in medical technology are giving us the option to make dwarves taller or to prevent them from being born at all.

First, in the 1980s, came a surreal-sounding surgical procedure that literally stretches dwarves' arms and legs. A surgeon cuts small incisions through skin and muscle to reach the bone, which he slices into two sections. Then he implants high-tension wires into the two sections of bone. These are connected to a "fixator": a frame, roughly resembling the Eiffel Tower, that goes

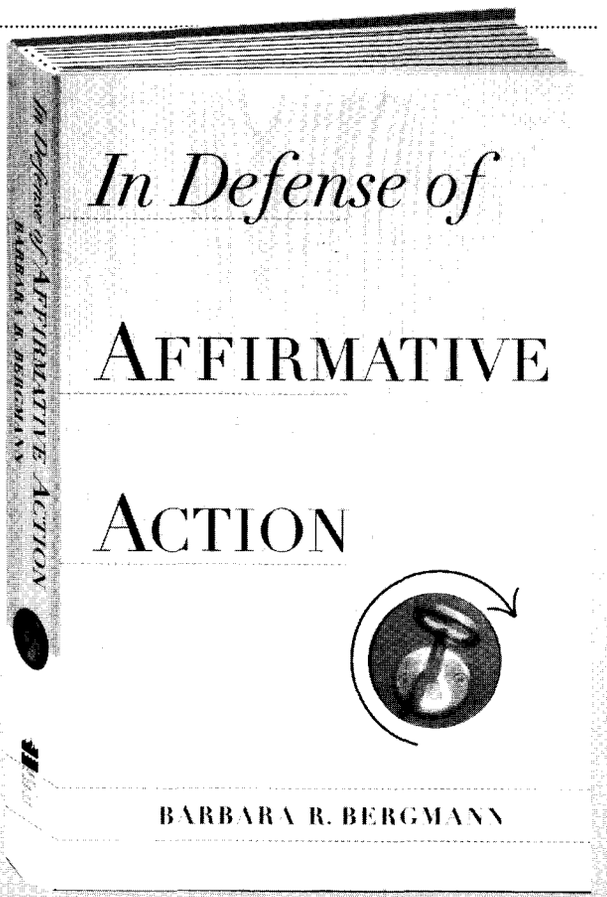
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ARE THE BENEFITS OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION WORTH THE COSTS?

Economist Barbara R. Bergmann cuts through the incendiary rhetoric and offers incontrovertible evidence that affirmative action is the only remedy for the continuing discrimination against men and women of all colors in our society. From debunking the myth that blacks or women "always" win at the expense of the white males, to countering the assertion that affirmative action negatively affects its beneficiaries, Bergmann leads readers through the labyrinth of charges and counter-charges to reveal why affirmative action represents the best—and most moral path—to eliminating racial and sexual discrimination.

"Barbara Bergmann...combines good, compassionate sense with first-rate professional competence and a wonderful capacity for getting and organizing the relevant information."
—John Kenneth Galbraith

"*In Defense of Affirmative Action* spells out through vivid analogues and examples why affirmative action is still desperately needed to keep the doors of educational and employment opportunities open."
—Eleanor Smeal



A New Republic Book

BasicBooks
A Division of HarperCollins*Publishers*
Also available from HarperCollins*CanadaLtd*
http://www.harpercollins.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

around the limb like a cast. The fixator pulls the two sections of bone apart—with help from the patient, who has to turn screws on the apparatus every day to keep tugging the bone along. The body's natural healing mechanisms do the rest of the work, growing extra bone, muscle and skin as the tension continues. At the rate of about a millimeter a day, over a span of several months, the bone can be extended to as much as a foot longer than it would have been without "the human erector set," as some professional papers call it.

Developed in the 1950s and '60s by Gavril Abramovich Ilizarov, an orthopedist in the city of Kurgan, 1,000 miles east of Moscow, the technique came to Western Europe in the 1980s and was first tried in this country in 1987 by Dror Paley, now a Baltimore surgeon and an associate professor at the University of Maryland's medical school. There are a number of variations on the method, Paley says, but they all derive from Ilizarov. It has caught on fast, replacing much bloodier and less successful approaches like the Wagner Method, in which, Paley says, "you just cut through everything and crank it out at about two millimeters a day." Now, hundreds of the operations are performed every year. Paley himself—now a co-director of the Maryland Center for Limb Lengthening and Reconstruction at the Kernan Hospital in Baltimore—has performed some 1,500 since 1987.

The vast majority of the operations, though, reassemble shattered limbs or straighten bones deformed by infections, cancer surgery or birth defects. (A common use is to lengthen an injured leg so it will be as long as its counterpart.) Why, the LPA activists like to ask, should a little person put him or herself through it? After all, the Ilizarov technique is no day at the beach. The treatment takes months and is demanding in many ways, "especially," one journal abstract adds helpfully, "for the patient." Some people who've been through it say the lengthening bone merely aches; others say the pain is far worse than that. The patient can walk after a few days (the Ilizarov apparatus bounces along with each step like a trampoline), but the procedure requires physical therapy, and there can be complications, such as temporary palsies and other odd nerve behavior, infections from the wires, difficulty standing on the toes. The surgery is also expensive ($80,000 to $130,000 to lengthen a pair of legs, Paley says), though insurers often cover it. Most poignantly, as a way of making dwarves taller, it can only be performed on kids. After age 20 the bones aren't flexible enough to stand the stretching.

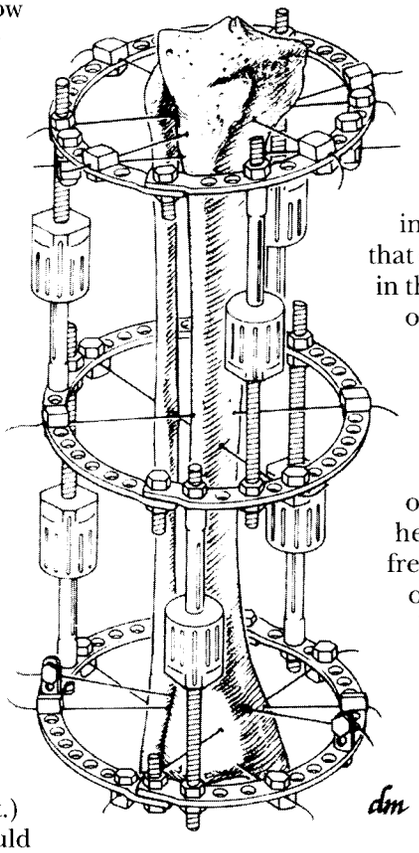


DIAGRAM OF ILIZAROV APPARATUS

The LPA take on the surgery invokes the rhetoric honed in movements of the gay and the deaf: the image of a lone swan amid uncomprehending ducklings, unaware what others of his kind are about. After all, the child on whom Ilizarov surgery is to be done is likely surrounded by average-height parents, siblings and doctors. "Many of these decisions about leg lengthening are being taken by parents long before a child is of age to really know," says Angela Muir Van Etten. "We're not just talking about size, we're talking about identity. It's like saying, 'I wish I weren't born.' "

But not all LPA members want to play the identity card as thoroughly as the leadership does. They say being several inches taller makes a lot of things, from driving to reaching the second shelf to getting a job, a lot easier. And they point to signs that the surgery can help forestall some of the back problems dwarves often develop later in life.

So the LPA confines itself to pointing out the drawbacks and recommending that dwarves who want the surgery have it done in the experimental program at the University of California at Los Angeles, which is run by David Rimoin, professor of pediatrics at UCLA and a member of the LPA medical advisory board. Rimoin said he was "totally opposed" to limb-lengthening surgery until he attended a conference on achondroplasia several years ago where he was impressed by how pleased and pain-free some European patients were. He takes only patients 12 years old or older and includes psychological counseling in his program ("a waste of time," says Paley, who stopped counseling years ago). Rimoin stresses that he considers the technique a medical experiment, whose long-term effects aren't known.

"We can't say no member of the LPA has ever had it done," Ricker concedes. "Though certainly no second-generation person has had it done." Arguments over the procedure have broken out on the group's Internet bulletin board, she says, and what she then describes is the familiar identity-politics drama of someone discovering that the sturdy scaffolding the group provides can also feel like a cage: "There was a guy on the board who had had it done, and there were people infuriated at him that he had had it done. And he got mad, too. He basically said, 'Don't psychoanalyze me when you don't even know me.' "

After leg-lengthening surgery got established in the late '80s, the '90s brought medical advances that may have an even more profound impact on dwarves: the genes that cause the condition are being identified. In the summer of 1994, for example, a team headed by John Wasmuth, a geneticist at the University of California at Irvine, found the gene that causes achondropla-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sia, which is responsible for more than half the incidence of dwarfed babies in the United States. Five or six other genes are responsible for another 30 percent of dwarfism, and they're eagerly being sought. Later that same year, for instance, another important dwarfism gene was found by a team from MIT and the University of Helsinki in Finland.

There was never any doubt that a fetal test for the achondroplasia gene would be developed, because a fetus conceived by two dwarf parents has a 25 percent chance of inheriting the mutated gene from both mother and father, which dooms the baby to an early death. (He or she has a 50 percent chance of inheriting one copy of the gene, resulting in dwarfism, and a 25 percent chance of not receiving the mutation from either parent.) But the prospect of an amniocentesis test for dwarfism raises the question: How deep do "average-height" Americans' laissez-faire attitudes about identity go?

Ricker points out that the question presents itself not as a simple yes-no switch, but as a continuum: there are some 200 genetic anomalies that can cause rarer forms of dwarfism, each with its own character. "For example, diastrophic dysplasia is another condition. This is typically more disabling orthopedically than achondroplasia. People who have it use crutches. They wear special shoes. But we don't see this as any big deal." But, as the joke goes, what mean we? An average-height doctor trying to give prospective parents an estimate of "quality of life"—the kind of cost-benefit analysis beloved of HMOs—might see it as a bigger deal. So might those parents themselves.

The prospect is considered remote by some geneticists, but it nagged at Wasmuth. In the journal *Cell*, in which he announced his team's discovery, he went out of his way to argue that only dwarf parents should be given the option of testing a fetus for the gene. Wasmuth, who died last year at 49, often spoke about the dangerous prospect of "personal selection" interfering with "natural selection," and to illustrate his point he said he knew of at least one dwarf couple who wanted amniocentesis so they could abort *unless* the fetus was dwarfed. "I don't know anybody that would do that," Ricker told me. "Or that would publicly say they would, anyway."

This little tale of role reversal, though, does underscore an irony of this identity-happy era: achondroplastic dwarves, having the same mutation, literally share a gene. In this respect, they are more genetically isolatable right now than any ethnic group or gay people. And their condition is far more amenable to surgical reversal. Once stereotyped as little more than freaks, dwarves are now on the edge of the dilemma of science and identity. How their culture finally determines the question could have ramifications far beyond their small world.

DAVID BERREBY is writing a natural and cultural history of xenophobia.

The millennium goes green.

MOMMIE DEAREST

By Alex Heard

"It's been a gaudy party.... [Now] the bill is being presented—but who shall pay the charge?... And what's at stake? Why, nothing, except the future of man...."
—from *Blindsided*, a novel about the coming "Earth Changes," by Dick and Leigh Richmond-Donahue

Chill out, Ted Kaczynski. "This conference is like a Lamaze class," chirps Annie Kirkwood as she peers over a podium, her face a portrait of grumpy benevolence. A short, plump woman in her mid-50s, she sighs, squints like a grizzled vet eyeing newcomers at an A.A. meeting and then drops her tough-love payload. "You can't just sit there with your legs crossed," she explains. "Sometimes you have to get into the blood and guts of it. And that's what we're going to do now. After that, we'll get to the *joy* of Earth Changes."

Some 500 people murmur uneasily. Assembled in the ballroom of a rim-city high-rise hotel in north Dallas, they're a roughly equal mix of men and women, mostly white, middle-aged and middle-class, and they've pilgrimaged from all over the country to attend this weekend event, innocuously labeled "Earth Festival: A Celebration of Earth's Future." Don't be fooled by the perky title, though. The agenda is an obscure but fairly widespread blend of New Age doctrine, doomsaying and quasi-good-news preaching—collectively labeled Earth Changes—that presents a jarring apocalyptic vision.

Kirkwood, an Earth Changes prophetess, organized the conference with her husband, Byron, and early on a springtime Saturday morning she's issuing a warning: straight talk is about to commence on the planet's pending and extremely violent "birthing" into a twenty-first-century period of peace and enlightenment. Conscientious students that they are, the audience wants to hear it. Being only human, they also sort of don't.

That's because, to believers, Earth Changes is just as scary as its estranged older cousin: Christian premillennialism, which has it that sinful mankind is rapidly skidding toward a final assault from Satan, to culminate in history's greatest battle—at Armageddon, where Christ will defeat the forces of evil, ushering in a millennium of peace. Earth Changes also predicts horrible upheavals in the near future but for reasons that seem slightly more plausible than Revelation's supernatural cast of multi-horned beasts and angelic SWAT teams. Mashing the panic button, Earth Changes takes existing environmental and social problems (global warming,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rainforest depletion, AIDS), mixes them with any available prophecy that points to imminent calamity (Revelation; the quatrains of the sixteenth-century French psychic Nostradamus; ancient Hopi Indian visions) and extrapolates, using a leap of hysterical faith.

While this view of "reality" isn't likely to sweep away scientific materialism or the world's great religions anytime soon, it's a fascinating case study in how millennial movements adapt themselves to the crises of the moment. These belief systems—which we often assume to be boom-and-bust panics that go away when the millennial prophecy fails—contain doctrinal "safety valves" that allow them to continue regardless of what happens. That's because this alarmism can, paradoxically enough, be soothing. Like millions of millennially minded fundamentalist Christians, occultists and green-tinged Luddites, Earth Changes believers have adopted a doctrine that helps them find meaning in the chaotic modern world. We're likely to see more of them around.

Hence, in the view of ECers, a tropical storm season that reaches the letter S isn't just a bad weather year: it's a sign that the tribulation has already begun. EC doctrine says that the nasty skies, ethnic cleansing and "emerging viruses" in the news of late are part of the planet's attempt to rid itself—consciously—of the bulk of pestilential mankind. Worse is coming around the year 2000: perpetual hurricanes and tornadoes, continent-cracking earthquakes, melting ice caps, floods, burping volcanoes, famines, plagues, global warfare, nuclear terrorism. ECers like to produce creepy maps that show what the various continents will look like after the dust clears. The best-known, Gordon-Michael Scallion's "Future Map of the United States: 1998-2001," depicts a much-wider Mississippi River (ciao, Louisiana), a partially flooded Manhattan and a fractured California, hanging on in scattered chunks such as "the Island of Mount Shasta."

Both fundamentalist Christianity and Earth Changes offer believers theological escape clauses, of course. For some fundamentalists, it's the Rapture, a moment before the tribulation when the faithful will literally be whooshed up to heaven. Earth Changes is even more accommodating: it holds that the changes don't even have to occur, a slim-but-real possibility that hinges on humans making nice. As Annie Kirkwood explains in her 1991 book *Mary's Message to the World*—a compendium of channeled Earth Changes prophecy from the Virgin Mary, which the Kirkwoods say has sold 400,000 copies worldwide—the Big Bop can be softened, perhaps avoided altogether, if mankind starts living in peace and harmony. Does this idea lead to a strong strain of environmental or social activism? Not really. With some exceptions, ECers usually emphasize getting one's own spiritual house in order and, by example, drawing others to the right path. Should a critical mass not be reached ... well, many people will die. The survivors will be highly spiritual adepts who got right with the planet, and they'll inherit a heaven-on-earth where peace reigns, nature is healed and humans are perfect.

How many people believe such talk? Well, more than would fit into an underground bunker in Montana. Nobody has exact numbers, though book sales and newsletter subscriptions would suggest tens of thousands. My own amateur research began a few years back when I met a pair of wealthy, crabby Maryland retirees who, fired by EC beliefs, built a geodesic survival home in the hills of West Virginia. I've since found that pockets of Earth Changes belief exist in every region of the country, clustered in places like West Virginia, eastern North Carolina, the Ozarks and the northern Rockies (Montana again!)—spots that offer the seclusion, pure water and flood-avoiding altitude that many ECers think is necessary for survival.

Which is where Byron Kirkwood comes in. A chubby, friendly 49-year-old who takes the podium after Scallion speaks to us via satellite link, his specialty is survival prep, a central, sticky problem of Earth Changes belief. On this score, Christian premillennialists have it relatively easy. Since they'll all be levitated on Rapture Day, they don't have to prepare for an extended hunker. ECers, like Mormons, believe an elect will physically survive.

Not everybody wants to accept this, preferring a more metaphorical reading of the Earth Changes idea that leaves believers two stark options. At one extreme is survivalism, sometimes backed up with firearms and a "me-and-mine-first" attitude—personified by the heroes of the novel *Blindsided*, an affluent couple who flee New York for the hills of Pennsylvania, where they keep the dying world at bay with guns. At the other is do-nothingism—faith that the changes will occur more in the hearts of men than on the maps of Gaia. In between is a gray zone, where people like Claire Applegate, one of the conference attendees I met, must decide whether or not to remain, say, in a low-lying, urban-nightmare zone like Houston. Applegate says that lately she's felt "called" to rural Colorado, but for now she's staying put. EC survivalism doesn't differ all that much from right-wing survivalism, except that ECers anguish over whether they should protect themselves with weapons. (One ECer I know worries, too, that she'll have to share the post-apocalyptic world with a bad element: "Will the only other people left alive," she asks, "be Nazis and skinheads?")

The Kirkwoods, however, have already voted with their feet. Not long after the Earth Festival they moved to the Ozark foothills of northeast Oklahoma, where Byron is exercising his special brand of *Popular Mechanics* millennialism. Their new life is designed in keeping with Byron's 1993 book, *Survival Guide for the New Millennium* and his catalog of "Spiritual Advancement and Emergency Preparedness Products" (including "hard hats, respirators, first-aid kits, solar/dynamo radios and nitrogen-packed long shelf-life food").

On Sunday, Earth Fest's closing day, Kirkwood delivers a rambling, intimate talk designed to close the weekend on an upbeat note. Since this time yesterday, the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

crowd has been told that the Antichrist is alive and powering up in the Mideast; and that most EC maps are too optimistic. In fact, the United States will be reduced to a few floating land-strips in a sea of brine.

Now, though, Kirkwood's soothing talk touches on her own worries about the future—is she too out of shape to survive in a lean, mean post-apocalyptic landscape?—and personal woes, including an alcoholic son, economic worries and agoraphobia, a condition that made her reluctant to come forward as Earth Changes' John the Baptist. "I would stand at the sliding glass door of my house and look out and be terrified," she recalls, "so I know what fear is."

The speech works: Annie's self-revelatory riffs wash over the crowd like healing water, ending the event in a surprisingly can-do spirit that says a lot about why people are attracted to the intellectual terrors of Earth Changes. What it says is: they're not, really. For a lot of them, that stuff is simply the thrills and chills part—the fire-and-brimstone preaching that precedes the cooing promise of salvation. At heart, Earth Changes is less about the apocalypse and more about transforming the millennium from the biggest, sprawlingest story in history to something small and manageable: self-help. Kirkwood admits as much. "People talk about the thousand years of peace," she says. "I want to tell you that it's not going to start with the drop of the ball in Times Square bringing in the year 2000. For people who have done their healing work—Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Gamblers Anonymous—they've already started their thousand years of peace."

If only the Unabomber had met Kirkwood, he might still be a relatively hinged Berkeley professor. At its worst, as with the most fevered forms of Christian fundamentalism, the millennium is about them (the damned) versus us (the saved). But Earth Changes also represents a kindlier, more nurturing vision, of bringing all mankind aboard a shiny-time ark to the future. The Rapture meets the support group.

You can see it ultimately in the literature. After surviving hurricane winds, earthquakes and attacks by crazed, plague-pocked "drugees," the heroes of *Blindsided* survive to witness the dawn of the millennium. In the book's closing moments, they contemplate the New Earth as it glistens in its magical placenta:

> "It was over. . . .
> The newborns were scattered across her surface, like a litter of pups, and would soon be ready to nurse at her widely separated teats. . . .
> The birthing was over. The new life could grow slowly to an independent maturity, under her care. Her body could return to a slow pulsing, the abundance, the vitality it would need in the warding of her children. . . . .
> Thank you, he whispered. To someone. To somewhere. Out there."

ALEX HEARD, a TNR contributor, is writing a book about millennial subcultures, *Apocalypse, Pretty Soon*, to be published by W.W. Norton.

THE SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS℠
H. UPMANN CHURCHILL

Savor for yourself the sublime smoking experience of the 5½" x 46 ring H. Upmann Churchill. Smoked by successful people and men of decision from Maine to Monte Carlo. A favorite of diplomats, executives, thought leaders and trend setters, it's the ultimate of smoking pleasure and satisfaction. "When a cigar can make you forget Havana, that's true one-Upmann ship."

MY INTRODUCTORY OFFER TO NEW CUSTOMERS

8 Upmann Churchills for $15.00; Regular Retail $24.00. Plus - A $10.00 Credit Memo towards your first re-order of $50.00 or more from our catalog.

THOMPSON CIGAR CO.
P.O. Box 31274 • Tampa, FL 33633-0537 • Dept. T89
Send me 8 Cameroon wrapper, H. Upmann Churchills (N06422) For $15.00 + $3.95 shipping. (Florida residents add 6% sales tax + appropriate county tax). ONE ORDER PER CUSTOMER

My Name
My Street Address Apt. #
City State Zip
Daytime Phone # ( )
❑ $18.95 Enclosed. Charge to my ❑ VISA ❑ MasterCard ❑ AmExpress ❑ Discover
Signed
Credit Card No. (Print All Digits) Exp. Date
OFFER EXPIRES 10/96 • OFFER NOT AVAILABLE TO MINORS • OFFER GOOD ONLY IN THE USA

1915 THOMPSON & CO., INC.
America's Oldest Mail Order Cigar Company. Est. 1915

© 1995, Thompson & Co., Inc.

1-800-237-2559 Ext.-T89 Fax: 813-882-4605

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The coming Mideast meltdown.

WAR AFTER PEACE

By Robert D. Kaplan

The Middle East peace process may be nearing its endgame. If, in the next year, a deal is struck between Israel and Syria, the Arab-Israeli sideshow to the cold war will be officially over, seven or so years after the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Ceremonies and retrospectives will follow. For weeks, unbridled and, in many cases, unreflective optimism will reign on the editorial pages. Then reality will set in.

By reality I don't mean a flaw in the accords themselves. I mean that, instead of the end of history in the Middle East, we will see a new, Darwinian beginning of it. Instead of the Great Middle East Hugfest (the Bill Clinton scenario), or the Great Middle East Prosperity Sphere (the Shimon Peres scenario), a more normal historical process will emerge. On the one hand, the stability brought by superpower intervention and the simplicity brought by the neat, bipolar rivalry between two ethnic groups (Jews and Arabs) will diminish. On the other, the highest population growth and urbanization rates on the planet (sub-Saharan Africa excepted, though not by much) will put increased pressure on societies already under great strain. There has been a great deal of social change in the Muslim Middle East these past five decades but precious little political change. The one may be about to catch up with the other.

Sure, peace will bring water-sharing projects, road links, tourism and so forth. But these much-trumpeted "joint ventures" will initially benefit those Arabs already in the middle class. Economic growth is never even, and it is too much to expect that any peace treaty—even the grandiose kind Peres imagines—can liberate the Arab masses from their economic plight. Because peace will create business opportunities for well-off Israelis and Arabs, it will bring the upper economic strata of Arab society psychologically closer to their Israeli counterparts, even as it separates them further from the poor in their own countries. Therein lies one of the new vectors of conflict. Divisions between states will blur, while class and cultural divisions within Middle Eastern states sharpen. Arab Christians in Egypt, Syria and the West Bank may eventually become as embattled as Muslims in the Balkans.

Because the Arab-Israeli dispute occurred in our lifetime, we tend to believe that we've been living through a period of momentous history. But, in fact, there has been comparatively little political change in the Middle East. Consider Egypt. For more than forty years, it has been a socialist kleptocracy ruled by the same class of Nasserist officers: some more repressive than others, some friendly to Israel, some hostile to it, but all basing their rule on emergency military law, a gargantuan and largely useless bureaucracy and parasitic entrepreneurs who produce substandard goods bought by the state and rarely pay the taxes they should. On the other hand, there has been great social movement. On the eve of the 1967 war, Egypt had 30 million inhabitants. Now there are more than 60 million. In the 1960s, only 30 percent of all Egyptians lived in cities; now almost 50 percent do. Forty percent of the population is under 15. At some point, sustained demographic pressures may provoke fundamental political change, or breakdown.

In Syria the story is much the same. It held its last free elections in 1954, and the country split along sectarian lines. Since then, political development has been arrested by sterile, neo-fascist military rulers. Syria in the mid-1990s is a more tractable and diluted version of Yugoslavia in the late 1980s—a society riven by regionally based ethnic groups but without Tito's rotten legacy of communism. Syria will not explode as Yugoslavia did, but some sort of upheaval probably lies ahead. The end of hostility with Israel, rather than strengthening the Syrian state, may unleash social and political forces that will, one day, unravel it.

The other countries of the Arab world face, to lesser or greater degrees, these same threats. As Arab populations increase, they become increasingly difficult to control centrally, especially if some of their economies do not keep up. This is especially true in places where the regime is afforded little respect because it is uncivil or because it is dominated by a hostile group. Like Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states have experienced great demographic and social changes over the past decades but little or no political evolution. In North Africa, which has among the biggest youth populations and highest rates of urbanization in the world, only Algeria so far has seen significant political evolution, and what a bloody, tumultuous evolution it has been. Iraq and Sudan, whose colonial borders are cruelly averse to ethnic ones, may not be around in ten or fifteen years.

Why will Arab populations no longer remain passive in the face of their hapless, vicious governments? After all, for much of history Arabs, as well as Turks and Persians, have been misruled by illegitimate regimes. In 1891 Viscount James Bryce observed that "worse administrations" than those in the Islamic world "can hardly be imagined." But Bryce also noted that "When in any society opinion becomes self-conscious ... that society is already progressing, and soon finds means of organizing resistance and compelling reform." There is no Islamic society that has not in recent decades become "self-conscious." The communications revolution is bringing European soap operas into mud-brick Arab shanties, even as Arab upper

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

classes travel back and forth to the West and communicate on the Internet. All this, coupled with fast-forward urbanization and population growth, means that Arab cultures are dramatically evolving: the Arab middle classes are more Westernized, the Arab poor more restive. Arabs have become aware of how their societies compare to others: this is what is new—and destabilizing—about the region.

And as cultures evolve national characteristics change. Anyone who has spent time in the Nile Valley recently knows that the traditional description of Egyptians as the easygoing "Italians of the Arab world" (compared to the "Germanic" Iraqis) is losing currency. A doubling of the population and the replacement of rural poverty by urban poverty is making Egyptians increasingly hard-edged and short-tempered, particularly in the southern part of the country, where the Islamists are strong. The regime is evolving, too, each year becoming a bit more repressive. Given the scale of Egypt's social and demographic change, there can be no political stasis. If President Hosni Mubarak is still in power a decade from now, he will preside over either a more democratic, albeit highly chaotic, river valley civilization or a substantially more repressive state apparatus. Given the extent of anti-American sentiment in Egypt today, the U.S. may prefer the latter.

A grand, Peres-style peace treaty may lead to more Middle Eastern experiments with democracy. But, as we should already have learned from the elections in Algeria, this will not necessarily increase stability. Any form of democratization—given the out-of-control demographics of the region, the growing political awareness of partially educated and unsophisticated millions and the preponderance of tired, cynical regimes—will be explosive, in some cases violently so.

The coming tumult will not exclude Turkey and Iran, whose own highly dynamic populations are already undergoing immense change. In Turkey, Kurdish renaissance is further propelled by Islamization that, in turn, is tied to internal migration and urbanization, all of which erode the ability of the Ankara government to satisfy the most sophisticated population in the Muslim Near East. Close to Europe, with a middle class created by an organic process of industrialization rather than overnight oil wealth, Turkey has a social and political adhesive that other countries in the region lack. But, though change in Turkey may be more gradual, its direction is clear: greater religious identity (Islamic); greater ethnic and racial identity (Kurdish and Turkic); and lesser loyalty to a state with fixed boundaries. Turkey's stability has often been taken for granted. It should no longer be. The political class, as the recent elections show, is deadlocked, with Islamists a growing grass-roots force. Turkey's cohesion is as dependent on the military as it was a half century ago, when its experiment with democracy first began.

But it is Iran, with a population both larger and better educated than Egypt's, that has the greatest chance to remake the region. Since the Islamic Revolution, Iran's population has doubled, and population growth has outpaced economic growth by 1.4 percent a year since 1985. In the course of this economic decline, Iran's revolution has moved from fiery Jacobinism to ossified Bolshevism. The only remaining question is whether this is an early Brezhnev phase or a late Chernenko one. Iranian newspapers protest government corruption. Mosques are empty and Western culture ubiquitous. Anti-Americanism is dead except inside certain government ministries and religious seminaries or when the regime hires a crowd for a demonstration; and even there one senses that the slogans have long ago lost *puissance.* A stranger from another era deposited suddenly in Egypt, then in Iran, might think it was the latter, not the former, where the U.S. enjoyed a large diplomatic presence and good relations.

Ironically, the Iranian regime's very internal weakness may postpone its demise. Because Iranians can increasingly say and do what they want, few feel an immediate need to replace the government. But when the counterrevolution does come it could further weaken the Iranian state, leading to upheavals in Iran's ethnic border areas among Kurds, Azeri Turks and Turkomans. This would dramatically shift the regional power balance just as calcified Arab regimes and their corrupt elites, from Morocco to the Gulf, come under greater popular pressure than ever. Keep in mind that the real change in the Middle East in 1978-1979 was not the cold, anemic peace between Egypt and Israel—but the Iranian revolution. The twist this time around may be that peace between Israel and Syria will further undermine the Iranian regime, which has bet—publicly at least—on a continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Future leaders in Tehran may have to return to a strategy pursued by their predecessors—an alliance with the Jews of Palestine against the more numerous and hated Arabs.

Indeed, as this scenario unfolds in the years to come, Israelis may play the same role that Jews played in the Middle East of the Middle Ages—economic mediators between rival tribes and moving centers of power (as opposed to fixed states). Israel, in fact, is becoming more crassly bourgeois, even as its military officer corps is composed more and more of the religious. Israel's slow transformation into a society both more materialistic and, in some respects, more intensely religious may actually be necessary for Jewish survival in the high-tech, neo-medieval Middle East of the twenty-first century.

The time when secular elites—whether American, Israeli or Arab—drive Middle Eastern history is coming to an end. Henceforth, the big changes will come from below: from people less sophisticated, less tolerant, less fatalistic and, in many cases, more crudely ambitious. One of the most unstable periods in the region's long history may be underway.

ROBERT D. KAPLAN is the author of *The Ends of the Earth: A Journey at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (Random House).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A solution to downsizing.

LET THEM EAT STOCKS

By James Cramer

Psst. You want to make a killing in the stock market? Find out which Fortune 500 company intends to fire enough employees to make a splash in tomorrow's *Wall Street Journal.* It's a sure bet that the company's stock will jump, perhaps big (depending upon the number of people axed). Our rule of thumb at my investment company: we'll pay up to $2 more per share for every 10,000 people discarded.

I wish I could say I was joking, that I was just indulging in the gallows humor that all traders thrive on. But I'm deadly and morbidly serious. And for good reason. The presidents of America's major corporations make the same calculus I do every time they announce restructurings and downsizings. They are advised by the same people who advise me about my decisions to buy and sell stocks. We all have the same watchword: the more the merrier.

So, one by one, the executives of great American companies take turns axing employees and advancing their stock prices. The ritual is so ingrained that corporate boards have taken to rewarding management with additional stock and options precisely because they helped create stock market value. So a vicious cycle has been unloosed: executives know they can give themselves an income boost by either increasing sales and earnings (hard) or by laying off workers by the bushel (easy).

So the executives of AT&T, which has made more mistakes than just about any large company, get to cash in with hundreds of thousands of dollars in stock bonuses simply by announcing that 40,000 people must be let go (later revised down to 18,000, in part because of bad publicity). Meanwhile, the ex-employees have little to show for their efforts besides a cash package that falls far short of what they expected—and had the right to expect—from corporate America.

There's been plenty of hand-wringing about these layoffs and lots of fireworks from the likes of Pat Buchanan about how Wall Street and corporate America conspire in a heartless dance on the graves of these laid-off workers. President Clinton next week will convene a meeting where executives and lawmakers will exhort each other about the tragedy of middle management in the late '90s. We will hear a lot of well-meaning advice about retraining and plenty of questioning of the selfish motives of those doing the firing. But you can bet that at the conclusion of the conference the people who serve as cannon fodder for higher prices on Wall Street will be just as poor and just as unemployed as they were before the conclave.

There is a simple, purely capitalist solution to this heartless cycle. It requires no legislation, no heavy legal or accounting lifting and, shockingly, no money from the companies themselves. Yet it will enrich the fired employees and give them a sense of achievement that they deserve—and have lost through no fault of their own. Just give the laid-off employees stock options, struck the day before the layoffs are announced. Let them participate in the stock appreciation that their firings caused. One for one. Award more options for those who have worked the longest. Allow the employees to choose between cash and a participation in the gains that their firing will most certainly trigger.

Take the case of IBM, a company whose stock has been nothing short of sensational since its CEO Lou Gerstner bit the bullet and laid off tens of thousands of employees back in July of 1993. IBM had already announced a series of big layoffs but nothing to match the catastrophic cuts that came with the multibillion-dollar loss after IBM's dismal second quarter of that year. With the realization that Gerstner was serious about turning the ship around—manifested by his willingness to fire even the good employees—IBM's stock began its sustained run that left it three times higher three years later. Gerstner et al. may have seemed heartless at the time. No doubt in this environment he would have bumped AT&T's Robert Allen out of the headlines as corporate killer number one. But hindsight tells us that, if Gerstner had not made those layoffs, IBM may have gone the way of other tech dinosaurs who were unwilling to make tough choices. In short, the need to be competitive in the longer term legitimately did outweigh the pain that IBM's workforce had to suffer.

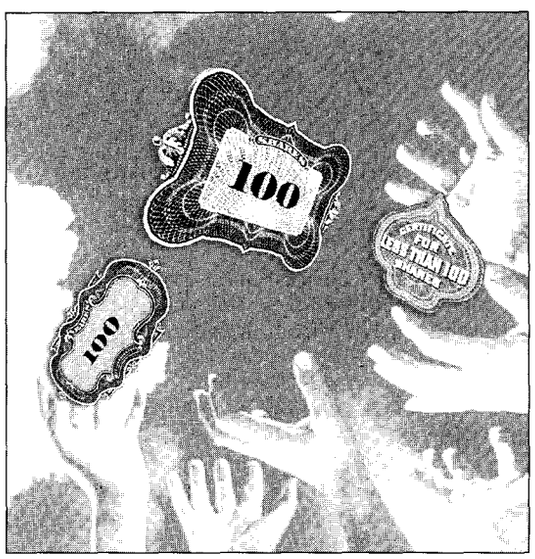
IBM's top management, again, legitimately made fortunes in stock options during this run, but the fired employees were, unfairly, left with nice severance pay and no take in the subsequent appreciation. How much fairer it would have been if ex-employees had been able to choose between a cash package and a package that included options pegged to capture all of the appreciation above $40—which was where the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stock was the day before the layoffs.

IBM, of course, should be thrilled to do this; it actually costs less out of pocket than a lump-sum and yet may go much further toward paying the mortgage, or starting a new business, than a cash package. The only cost would be in the dilution that comes from issuing more shares; this would be more than made up in value by the advance in the stock price.

In practical terms there would be no cash involved until a sale is made. Again, take the case of IBM. Let's say an ex-employee wanted to exercise her right to capture the difference between IBM the day before the layoffs and IBM two weeks later ($46 minus $40 equals $6). IBM will have granted her stock appreciation rights that allow her to capture those six points by selling the stock at $46 in the open market. If she received 1,000 rights for every year she worked at IBM, and she was a twenty-year veteran, she would have 20,000 rights times 6 points, or $120,000 in gain. That gain would be taxable—at the highest bracket, giving the employees a short-term capital gain north of $80,000. Not bad.



Now, if the employee could wait, she could have reaped a giant payday three years later by selling the stock at $120 ($120 minus $40 equals $80; $80 times 20,000 equals $1.6 million!), earning a sum that would be more than ten times what she probably received in cash. During that period she could have borrowed against the rights to start a new business or pay off a college tuition or two and still have plenty of savings. (IBM would not have to pay additional dividends on the rights because they don't formally count as shares.)

This plan should have no natural enemies. The companies save out of pocket cash by granting those who believe in the restructuring stock instead of lump-sums. The ex-employees, rather than feeling embittered by what their axing accomplished for the greedy hangers-on, including management, get to share in the wealth they created through no fault of their own. And the Treasury stands to benefit by taxing the ex-employees on the capital gains taken on the eventual sale of the stock. No new legislation is needed and companies already have a mechanism in place, the proxy statement, that would allow current shareholders to check off on such plans. At the same time that compensation committees award options for management, the annual spring rite we are going through now, they could establish stock appreciation rights that would be triggered in the event of layoffs and that could be used as a substitute for severance. Only the most curmudgeonly of shareholders would vote against such proposals, and every company could keep a batch of these rights ready in the event of a restructuring.

The beauty of all of this is that no government intervention is needed; it would be voluntary, but, once a handful of companies adopt these packages, all will follow. It could be included in the next proxy statement and approved by the shareholders by this time next year (companies are hosting their annual meetings right about now, so it is too late for this compensation season).

Oddly, I couldn't find any company that has currently put this idea into practice. When questioned about this proposal, both the Democrats in the White House and the Dole campaign seemed stymied because they couldn't point to a corporate good guy who already has a stock option severance plan. (I'd hinted at the proposal in an article about other matters in a recent issue of *New York* magazine; the idea was first suggested by Michael Hirschorn, the magazine's executive editor and a TNR alum.) In combing through the 100 largest layoffs of the last five years, I couldn't find a single one. Without a company to latch onto, the bully pulpits will be silent. What a shame. Companies shouldn't wait for Dole or Clinton to jam a plan down their throats. They should be clamoring to do the right thing themselves. That way, when the next round of restructurings begins, the more the merrier won't just apply to Wall Street anymore.

Of course, there are plenty of potential caveats and stumbling blocks. Companies whose stock is privately owned have no ability to grant such stock options, so employees at these companies couldn't benefit. Cumulative, gradual layoffs don't trigger a big splash, so companies could greedily stagger the layoffs and not award any stock options at all. (But current Wall Street psychology being what it is, executives are anxious to make as big a bang as possible out of the firings, so downplaying cutbacks won't make much sense.) Finally, companies are reluctant to award stock to employees other than top management, so starting to award stock appreciation rights to people who no longer even work there may mean a difficult cognitive leap. But, if the pace of these layoffs keeps up, and the press and politicians have their way, the alternative will be some unworkable legislative nightmare, one that smacks of the European corporate socialism that has ultimately bred higher unemployment and slower job creation than our vibrant, meaner brand of capitalism. Companies would do well to spare us government intervention by starting now to share some of the stock wealth with those who have departed through no fault of their own.

JAMES CRAMER is president of Cramer & Company and Bottom Line columnist for *New York* magazine.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Found Wanting

Three films of *Uncle Vanya* in two years! This might make any Chekhov lover nervous, but a sorry kind of reassurance comes with the knowledge that only one of them is admirable. The lovely one is the André Gregory-Louis Malle *Vanya on 42nd Street*. Then, in declining order, two "versions": Michael Blakemore's *Country Life*, set in Australia in 1919, which has some rewards; and now **August** (Samuel Goldwyn), set in Wales in the 1890s, which has very few. This later adaptation is by Julian Mitchell; the direction and the performance of Vanya are, sad to state, by Anthony Hopkins. (The Russian names have been changed to Welsh ones, of course, but I'll use the originals to save explaining.)

Why did Hopkins want to do this version? Because, as he frequently tells us, he is Welsh? If some special insight derived from this change—as the Australian Blakemore used his version to probe Australian mores—that might be justification. But the only specific use of the transposition in *August* is that Serebreyakov, instead of complaining about the country versus the city, complains of Wales versus his native England.

Even the pointlessness of the change would matter less if, in the changing, characters and interrelations hadn't been coarsened. Take the moment when Vanya discovers Astrov embracing Yelena, a moment of tacit pain. Here the embrace is changed to a full-mouth kiss with a close-up of Vanya discovering them and starting back in horror. Or take one of the great farce-drama moments in Chekhov—in all of drama—when Vanya fires a pistol at Serebreyakov. Here Vanya wields a double-barreled shotgun. With this change, no adaptation has ever more clearly epitomized itself.

Hopkins's direction is not always heavy, but his own performance needs a director. His Vanya mugs (deliberately) and jigs to show, I guess, that he knows he has been made a clown by fate, but this "business," along with more, proves that even a great actor can use help. Leslie Phillips is adequate as Serebreyakov, but Kate Burton as his young wife and Rhian Morgan as his daughter are utterly inadequate. On balance the most satisfying performance is of Astrov by Gawn Grainger, who suggests some of the deep pools in the man.

Richard Gilman says of Chekhov that he gives us "the grief of the actual." In the sublime closing moments of *Uncle Vanya*, Sonya fantasticates desperately about an afterlife that will recompense her and her uncle for the actual. In *August* that promise of heaven has been eliminated, but it doesn't matter because the actual is so pallid.

Suzan-Lori Parks is a gifted black American playwright who is dedicated to creating her own language, her own dramaturgy. At the very least her plays are burning and courageous.

It would be silly to look for that kind of writing and structure in the screenplay she wrote for Spike Lee's **Girl 6** (Fox Searchlight). When she took on this job, she knew—everyone knew—that she couldn't pursue her own style. My argument is not that the style of the screenplay is different from that of her plays but that she accomplished so little in this more conventional mode. She wrote a series of episodes about a young attractive black woman trying to make her way in the world, using her sexual self socially without physical involvement. But Parks has added nothing to our perceptions. She has simply rearranged quite familiar material, then presented it in quite familiar ways.

Girl 6—a tag that sounds like "girl sex" and converts her into merchandise—is so dubbed because of her number in a phone-sex operation where she works on her way to becoming an actress. White males, interviewing her for film jobs at the beginning and the end, supply the largest doses of sleaze, and there is also a white phone molester who threatens violence. Black maleness is chiefly represented by her ex-husband, who keeps pestering her for readmittance and by Lee himself as a friendly neighbor who would like to be her sex interest but isn't.

Theresa Randle, lively, pretty, plays Girl 6 in a collection of dresses and outfits that would have cost this young woman about 200 years' work. Well-known people appear in cameo roles—Madonna among them, of course. Lee directs with as close to total lack of conviction as I have seen in a director whose convictions have carried him over some rough spots in the past. At least we can

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Fargo. *A comedy-drama of kidnapping and murder in snowy Minnesota. The two genres don't mix, but the comedy is comic—which, for the Coen brothers, is saying a lot. (Reviewed 3/25/96)* **Flirting with Disaster.** *Light, delightful. David O. Russell, who wrote and directed* Spanking the Monkey, *proves, in this effervescent, sexy tale of a young man searching for his biological parents, that he has really arrived. (4/22/96)* **Jack and Sarah.** *A widowed young London lawyer copes with his life, work and infant daughter. The acting gives the fluff sufficient body—Richard E. Grant, Judi Dench, Eileen Atkins and Ian McKellen do something more than help. (4/15/96)* **The Star Maker.** *Sicily and Sicilians and cinema, by Giuseppe Tornatore, who showed in* Cinema Paradiso *that he loves all three. The story doesn't come to much, but the look and sound of it are enrapturing. (4/15/96)*—**SK**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

say of Parks that, though her script ended up banal, it began with some hint of serious intent. Not so with Lee's directing.

Claude Sautet, who made *Un Coeur en Hiver* among many, many others, now presents **Nelly and Monsieur Arnaud** (Artificial Eye), directed by him and co-written with Jacques Fieschi and Yves Ulmann. Sautet has just turned 72; *Nelly* is an old man's picture.

If you are still reading, perhaps someone who is Sautet's senior can presume to suggest that this film has gentle rewards for all. Nelly is a young Parisian who leaves her neurotically slothful husband and finds work as an assistant to Monsieur Arnaud, a wealthy older man who has been a judge in a French colony, then a successful business man, and is now retired. He is writing his memoirs for an interested publisher and needs Nelly's help. Most of the picture is about the relationship between this neat elderly gentleman and this attractive, observant young woman. (A small echo here of the bond between the young woman and the retired judge in Kieslowski's *Red*, but the pictures differ widely in intent. Also in cinematic method; Kieslowski is interested in visual richness, Sautet in clean simplicity.)

No slightest sexual action occurs between the two. Nelly's one affair in the film is with the editor of the publishing house. From the perspective of his age, Sautet focuses on the silent regret-and-relief in both the old man and the young woman that nothing sexual will happen between them, that each can enjoy the other's being with reserve, with no sentimentality yet with a special intimacy. All this in addition to their occasional disagreements and differences.

His wife, Monsieur Arnaud tells us, has been living with another man for twenty years. When Arnaud's book is just about finished, that other man dies and Madame returns. She and her husband decide to go on a long trip together—and will visit their son in Seattle. Nelly and Monsieur Arnaud, we feel, each has an experience to hoard. It will mean more to him, but she will have it for a longer time.

Sautet writes and directs like a first-rank minor novelist. He likes the gradations in small-scale events, apparently believing that life itself is dramatic, that it doesn't need to be dramatically arranged—at least not intrusively. He finds his mobility in the interweaving of friends and acquaintances, the interchanges in a living room, at a café table. He is a miniaturist who doesn't patronize.

His two principals help him greatly. Emmanuelle Béart, so fierce in *Manon of the Spring*, so complexly female in *La Belle Noiseuse*, so engagingly cool in *Un Coeur en Hiver*, comprehends the tacit vitality of Nelly. She avoids the mere blankness of Isabelle Huppert by convincing us that there is much within her taciturnity. Michel Serrault may be best known here as one of the gay pair in *La Cage aux Folles*, but his long and varied career began with the original *Diabolique* and a Sacha Guitry film and has continued interestingly ever since. In his own way Serrault is as polished as Sautet, and his certainties help to give this film the pleasures of burnished, quiet prose. •

Jed Perl on Art

An Unknown Masterpiece

Jean Hélion's *The Last Judgment of Things*, a twenty-seven-foot-long triptych that is one of the few sure masterpieces painted anywhere in the past twenty years, is being seen in New York for the first time this month, at the Salander-O'Reilly Galleries. Completed in 1979, when the artist was 75, *The Last Judgment* is an allegory of endings and renewals that takes the wonderfully uncomplicated form of a ramshackle flea market—the sort of sight that's an element of weekly markets all over France—where young men and women are poking around amid the merchandise, trying on a thing or two, carrying away a bulky purchase. This is a work of magisterial informality, in which the most acute naturalistic observations are recorded in thin, once-over-lightly layers of giddily bright acrylic color. Beginning with an overall orchestration of grayed-down oranges and saturated greens, Hélion has unfurled an ordinary world that's also an extraordinary explosion of telegraphic abstract signs.

Hélion, who died in 1987, has received a number of major European retrospectives in the past couple of decades and been included in such key exhibitions as

ART SCENES

Galleries, Exhibits, and Events

Tricia Collins • Grand Salon 83 Grand Street, NYC, 10013, 212-226-1861, Tuesday-Saturday 12-6. May 2 - June 1, Sandro Chia small paintings with bronze frames. Work also by Beuys, Scarpitta, Webster and other important contemporary artists.

Swann Galleries 104 East 25th Street, NYC, 10010, 212-254-4710. AUCTIONS: April 18th: RARE BOOKS, features 16th to 20th century illustrated and miscellaneous fine books. April 24th: PHOTOGRAPHS, 19th century images and both expected and unusual 20th century works. May 9th: MAPS AND ATLASES, including books desired for their Plates, Decorative Graphics, and Ephemera. May 16th: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, MEDICINE, AND NATURAL HISTORY. May 23rd: WORKS OF ART ON PAPER. June 6th: AUTOGRAPHS, offering wide mix of documents, letters, signed and inscribed books, and photographs. Please write or call for preview hours, quarterly newsletter with full auction schedule, and to purchase catalogues.

Chester Lowenthal Tel 201-200-5484. ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISTS: Milton Resnick, James Brooks, George McNeil, Ray Parker, Michael Goldberg, 50's-60's oils; also, POP: George Segal sculpture and pastel, John Wesley acrylic. Collector must sell.

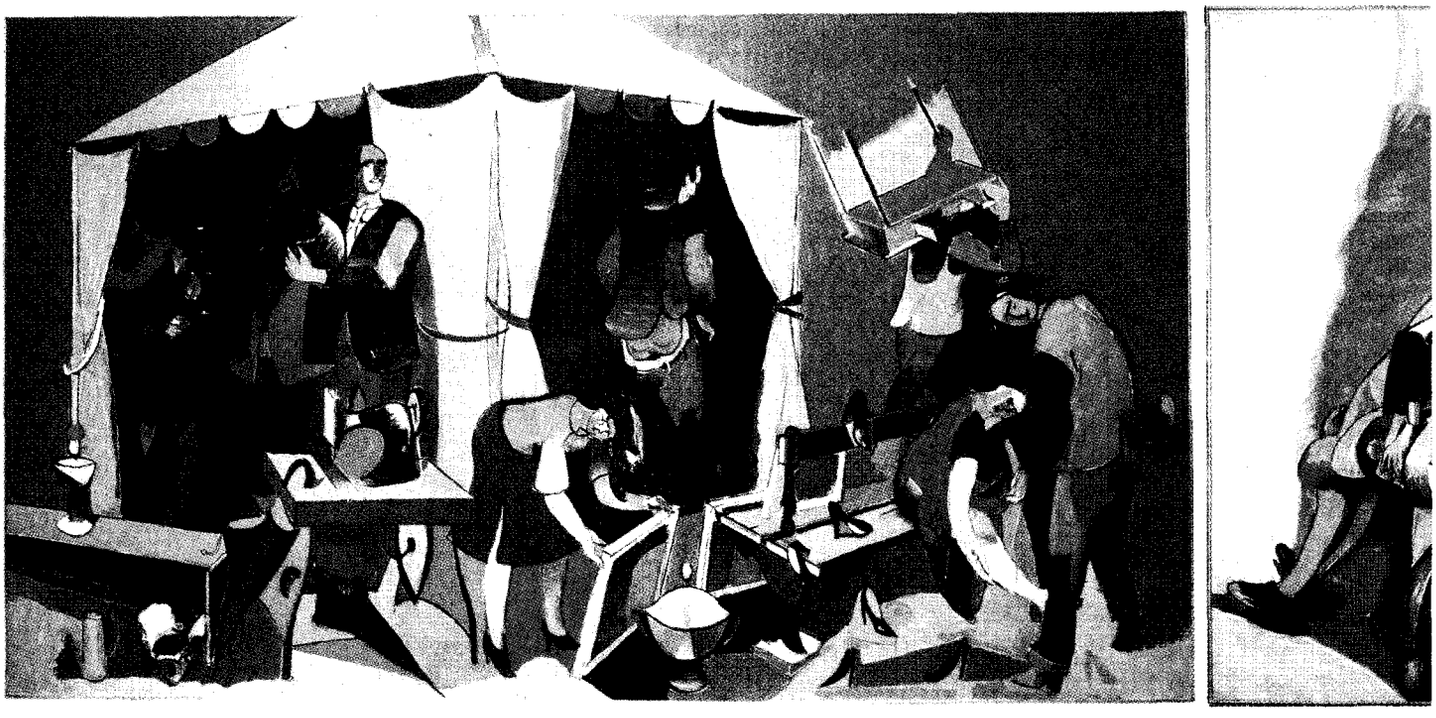
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"A New Spirit in Painting" at the Royal Academy in London in 1981 and "Identity and Alterity" at last summer's Venice Biennale. He's by no means an unknown artist; he may, in fact, be the most grievously underestimated well-known artist of our time. Thirty-five years ago, writing in the international edition of the *Herald Tribune*, the poet John Ashbery remarked that "Hélion is not just one of the great figurative painters; he is one of the greatest painters of any kind today." Five years ago, in an interview that was published in the *Oxford Art Journal*, the late Meyer Schapiro, who owned a cityscape by Hélion, spoke of his having been a "good friend" and gave a sympathetic account of the work.

Yet the complexity of Hélion's achievement, which includes pure abstraction and naturalistic detail and a lot in between, often leaves even interested viewers feeling mystified. The internal logic and overarching originality of what was a wonderfully unpredictable career is almost invariably misread as a series of reactions to other people's ideas. Through most of his working life, Hélion was so much at odds with mainstream thinking that there's probably little chance that even an event as important as the arrival of *The Last Judgment of Things* in New York City will have much resonance beyond a few contemporary artists and writers who are as clued in as Ashbery was in the '60s and Schapiro was in the '40s. Yet the painting has finally arrived here, and for those with eyes to see, it may be a conversion experience.

In almost every generation there's at least one painter who brings a novelist's thematic intricacy to the visual description of the modern world. Renoir and Seurat did it in the late nineteenth century with their paintings of Parisians at play, Léger's *City* defined the situation after World War I, and Hélion has done something along the same lines for our own time. Standing in front of *The Last Judgment*, I'm enveloped by its stirring architectural dimensions, and there's so much to look at that the experience becomes supremely active. The story unfolds as it might on an enormous Oriental screen. Hélion includes a baker's dozen of figures and a vast array of buyables that are strewn across a table, a bench and the ground. In the left panel clothes shopping is the main event. One man has gone into a tent to try on a pair of pants, another holds up a suit jacket, while a woman looks for just the right pair of high heels. There's so much going on that it may take you a minute to notice the pair of lovers embracing in the shadowy depths of the tent. Outside, a woman is examining some canvases and a man carries off a table.

Hélion gets a casually iconic impact out of acts as ordinary as shopping for shoes, and then without missing a beat he shifts to an interlude of cheerful Surrealist enigma in the center panel, where two dressmaker's mannequins are making love. An unusual aspect of *The Last Judgment* is the size of the panels. While most triptychs contain panels of equal size or a larger central panel, Hélion has chosen to join two broad horizontal side canvases to a much narrower central canvas. This may be his way of expressing a non-hierarchical view, of suggesting that the flea market experience is one of instability, that the center doesn't hold. The abbreviated central panel is a mysterious interlude—like the dream sequence in a full-evening ballet—after which in the right panel Hélion once again pursues what at first may appear to be more mundane matters. There's a big table holding a tuba and a record player, and lots of other stuff is arranged willy-nilly on the ground. A man is examining some candlesticks, a woman looks into a book, while all the way to the right there's a mysterious circular staircase. Scattered near its base are a woman's high-heel shoe and a man's hat and pants; we're obviously meant to understand that another pair of lovers has just disappeared upstairs.



THE LAST JUDGMENT OF THINGS, 1979, BY JEAN HÉLION

The Salander-O'Reilly show includes, in addition to *The Last Judgment*, some two dozen works ranging across the artist's career. People who haven't seen the scattered gallery shows devoted to Hélion in New York over the past twenty years will get a glimpse of his early purist abstraction but hardly any sense of the almost Flemish realism of the mid-'50s. While the density and variety of Hélion's career does not lend itself to a brief overview, the Salander-O'Reilly show may enable gallerygoers to see how *The Last Judgment* pulls together themes from all through the work. I think it's immediately apparent that a picture of people rummaging around in a flea market is about seeing new life in old forms, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the more you know about Hélion the more you'll understand how this process works.

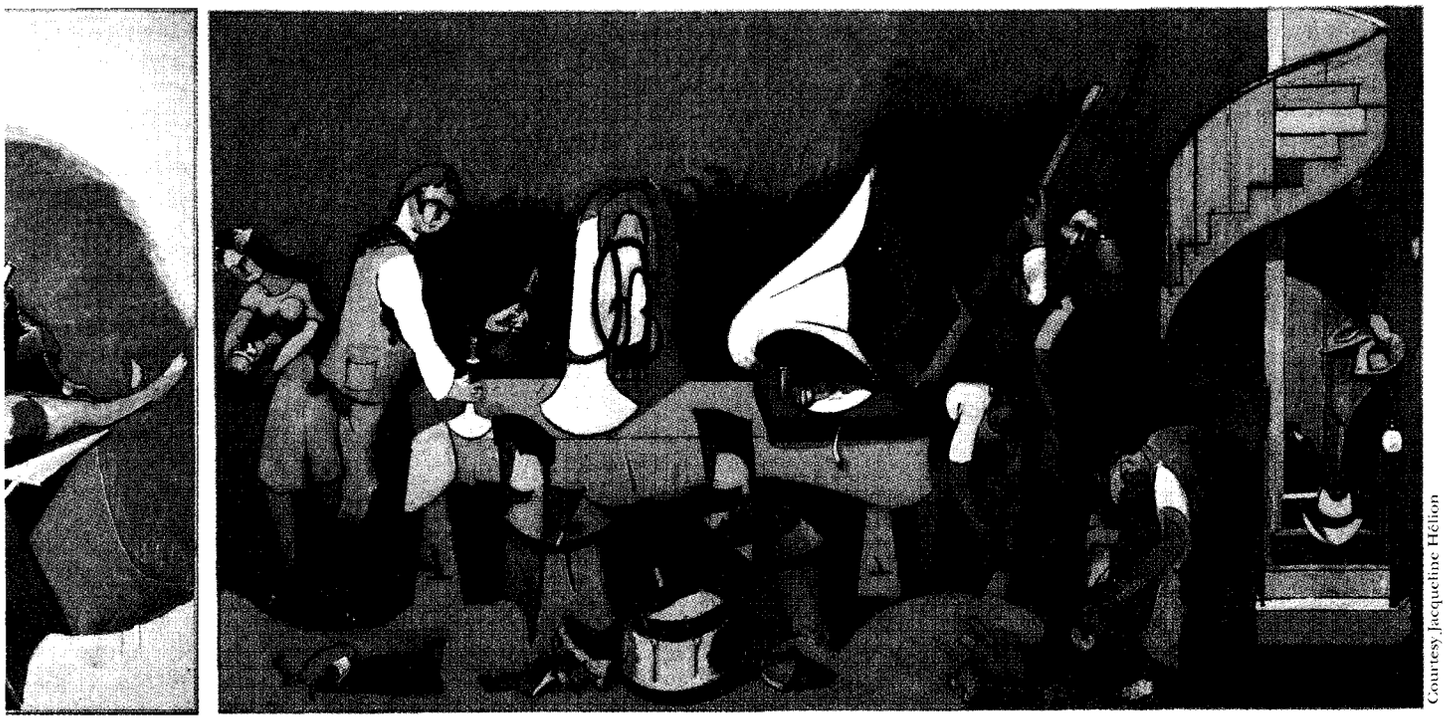
Hélion always wrote about what he was doing, and a two-volume selection from his notebooks, *Journal d'un peintre*, was published by Maeght in Paris in 1992. Going through the sections that cover the years when *The Last Judgment* was on Hélion's mind, it's evident that he's reflecting on events that go back to the '20s. The *Journal* includes some references to "*temps retrouvé*," which was at one time what Hélion was planning to call the painting. The French title, *Le Jugement dernier des choses*, also suggests more than material things. Hélion probably means us to understand *choses* as having some of the same implications that it has in the title of the third volume of Simone de Beauvoir's autobiography, *La force des choses*, which was published in 1963. *The Last Judgment* isn't just about seeing things, it's also about thinking about things. Another title might have been *The Flea Markets of My Life.*

Hélion was born in Normandy in 1904. He arrived in Paris in 1921 to apprentice to be an architect, but by the late '20s he was already an accomplished artist. The Uruguayan artist Joaquín Torres-García, whom Hélion met in 1927, had a great and in some respects lasting impact on the young painter; there are echoes of Torres-García's canvases, with their mysteriously effective fusion of tenderly folkloric and purely abstract elements, all through Hélion's career. It was also Torres-García who introduced Hélion to a Parisian avant-garde that by the '30s included such expatriates as Mondrian and Kandinsky. Hélion, who always had a gift for friendship, soon joined forces with Van Doesburg to form the Abstraction-Création group, which provided a rallying point for non-objective artists at a time when most sophisticated Parisian painters accepted semiabstraction but not total abstraction. Hélion acquired an excellent grasp of English, and in trips to England and America in the '30s he made the case for his own severely cool compositions even as he talked and wrote about the full range of recent nonobjective work. He helped the American Albert Gallatin put together a significant group of paintings, which was exhibited in the '30s at New York University, where it was the first public collection in which New York artists could see a Mondrian on permanent display.

By the time World War II was approaching, Hélion was living in America with an American wife. He was already juxtaposing impersonal, silvery-colored forms to create figure-like configurations, and after a while he was painting men in hats, a sort of mid-century Everyman. On the eve of the war Hélion returned to France to fight. He was taken prisoner by the Germans, spent many months working on a prison farm on the Polish border, ultimately escaped and made his way back to Paris and then to the United States. Before returning to his easel, he wrote in English an excellent book about his war experiences, *They Shall Not Have Me*, which became a best-seller. The book contains a number of accounts of the frenzied black-market activity in the prison camps, and these foreshadow the series of market paintings of thirty years later, which include studies of vegetable and lobster vendors as well as the flea market triptych.

In 1943, Hélion exhibited at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century Gallery in New York. Two years later he married Guggenheim's daughter Pegeen. Back in Paris they had a family, later separated, but for the rest of his life Hélion maintained ties with the high bohemian world in which Peggy was a great figure. During France's postwar renewal, Hélion painted the whole variety of Paris: the parks and the streets, the men reading newspapers, the poets and the artists' models, the baguettes heaped on the table in the atelier. In those years, Hélion knew both Giacometti and Balthus, and all their work gained force, depth and plangency from a sense of *temps retrouvé*—from their memories of artistic beginnings in the '30s. A particular spiritual affinity, a twilit poetic unreality, unites Balthus's *Passage du Commerce Saint-André*, with its view of a tiny street not far from the Existentialist cafés on the Boulevard St. Germain, and the canvases that Hélion was painting around 1950, in which poets fall asleep on the Parisian pavements and dream their dreams.

In 1967 Hélion embarked on the first of what would turn out to be a cycle of triptychs, a scene of the rue du Dragon in the 6th Arrondissement, with people sitting in a café and one of Hélion's own earlier abstract paintings on display in a



Courtesy Jacqueline Hélion

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gallery window. Here Paris has a light, open, prosperous feeling, the same side of the city that's reflected in the cycle of lithographs that Giacometti was working on at the end of his life for an album to be titled *Paris sans fin.* Two years after completing the *Triptyque du Dragon,* Hélion underlined his sense of a city that had regained its youth by devoting another triptych to the events of May '68. Although Hélion regarded some of the ideological forays of the New Left with the skepticism of a liberal spirit who visited Russia in the early '30s but was an anti-Communist well before the end of the decade, he found '68 fascinating as visual theater, and was by no means unsympathetic to the students' bold, experimental spirit.

By the late '60s, Hélion had switched from oil to acrylic, and the change, initially necessitated by an allergic reaction to the oil solvents, jump-started his final liberation from tonal color. There's a candy-colored craziness about his final full decade of work; he's the first artist to find a formal logic in the startling artificiality of acrylic hues. Hélion's style, which had been elaborately naturalistic in the early '50s, was becoming more and more generalizing and expansive, so that by the end of his life he had recovered his earliest abstract concerns, but within a representational context. In the '70s Hélion struggled with a series of eye problems, some ultimately incurable, and, thinking of the possible loss of his own sight, he sent a stream of blind men tapping their canes along the sidewalks in many of his canvases. Then, after painting the most broadly conceived of all his compositions in the early '80s, he lost his sight in 1983. In his last years he wrote a book, *Mémoire de la chambre jaune,* in which he described the paintings he had not had time to complete.

Ever since Courbet put all the sides of his life into the immense *Studio* in 1855, modern artists have from time to time created encyclopedic pictures which give personal experience a polemical force, and Hélion's *Last Judgment* fits right into this line. Hélion always wanted to come to grips with the most intellectually challenging aspects of twentieth-century art, and his canvases have the plainspoken force that you sometimes find in the work of artists who are not averse to taking controversial public stands. Whether Hélion was painting or talking about painting, he could give a traditional logic to a pared-down abstraction and articulate the progressive impulse behind an apparently antiprogressive realism. What's so miraculous about his work is the direct, succinct presentation of complicated material. That's something that characterizes Courbet, too. In *The Last Judgment* Hélion lays all his cards on the table, and part of what makes the painting a reach for our postmodern tastemakers is that they're so unused to forthrightness that they mistake it for naïveté.

In *The Last Judgment* we're present at the act of creation, with people and objects appearing out of the thin air of the acrylic paint. It's so simply done that it makes me smile. A table, shoes, figures emerge from a few passes of the brush across the canvas, and Hélion sets it all in marvelous motion. Hélion doesn't give us all the details of a figure, but after a lifetime of drawing and painting he's a master of gesture, and he paints actions that have hardly ever been painted before; the figure in the tent who's trying on a pair of pants brings a new kind of ordinariness into art. In general Hélion's figures don't seem particularly aware of one another, yet they're juxtaposed to such dramatic effect that a gallerygoer is likely to feel an emotional lift that comes with being together amid the fascinating clutter of forgotten things. *The Last Judgment* is about collecting the past, and Hélion has made some sensational finds. He's a Fauvist and a Cubist and a Surrealist—and of course a realist—and he's so untroubled about being all of these things at the same time that he can only be himself.

The Surrealists turned a visit to a flea market into a search for the Holy Grail, but Hélion tops them by getting a catch-as-catch-can impetuousness into this treasure hunt painting. Hélion alludes to that Surrealist rallying cry, Lautréamont's description of "the chance encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table," by casually leaning a couple of umbrellas against an old-fashioned floor-model sewing machine. This is Surrealism without any fancy cobwebs; so are the dressmaker's mannequins' amours and the stairway to nowhere. And the same kind of loosened-up, almost happy-go-lucky reaction that Hélion brings to the orthodoxies of André Breton, the man who was called the Pope of Surrealism, is key to the topsy-turvy but somehow nonconfrontational approach that he takes to Christian dogma.

Hélion is so sure of himself that he can walk straight through the allegorical minefield of a painting of modern life with a Christological theme and leave you wondering why you thought there could be a problem. In an early study for *The Last Judgment* (which is reproduced in the *Journal*) he included a grocer's scale, the sort of ordinary object that vendors in the markets use to weigh potatoes or carrots. It's one of the few items in the sketch that doesn't show up in the painting, and I imagine that's because Hélion concluded that the presence of a set of scales in this secular *Last Judgment* would push the metaphor too far. There's nothing overworked or discomfiting about Hélion's modernization of the Christian end of days. He observes that we're all making judgments all the time, but he doesn't draw one grand conclusion. Certainly he's tuned into a pixilated, let-the-chips-fall-as-they-may side of Christian iconography that you sometimes encounter in French Romanesque painting and sculpture. He has an affinity for the kind of Romanesque sculpture in which the world is represented as a complicated pageant with each person playing a small, apt role. And he obviously admires the calligraphic, exuberantly imaginative spirit of some twelfth-century wall paintings, in which people seem to whirl along on the currents of life.

Hélion's *Last Judgment* has a youthful exuberance. In a way it's surprising to think that this frieze full of young adults is the work of a 75-year-old man; but of course part of the explanation is that Hélion is recalling his own earlier days. The white soup tureen in the left panel will be familiar to admirers of Hélion's earliest still lifes. Writing in the *Journal* at the time he was working on *The Last Judgment,* Hélion recalled that he bought that tureen in the Saint-Ouen flea market in the '20s. So in a sense *The Last Judgment* is a recollection of Hélion's first decade as an artist. Hélion goes on to explain that in 1929 he smashed the tureen, and looking back on that smash-up he observes that it seemed to symbolize both the collapse of a marriage and the break-up of his first realist style into his early abstractions. In *The Last Judgment* the tureen is back in one piece, which is surely a demonstration of *temps retrouvé.* Yet there's even more going on here, because the unbroken ceramic is now broken up formally, by lines that run all the way from top to bottom and turn its flowing curvilinear volume into a series of elegantly symmetrical Cubist shapes.

To paint a *Last Judgment* is to weigh the impact of the past on the future, and certainly Hélion would savor the arrival of this vast composition in New York, a city that the great artists whom he knew when he was young, among them Léger and Mondrian, looked to as the metropolis of the future. Hélion's postwar painterly realism, with its celebration of a pure French lyrical style, can be read as a rejection of that American vision, yet it's interesting to find John Ashbery

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

remarking, in a 1960 essay for *Art News*, that Hélion's stylistic shift would have occasioned fewer shock waves in New York than it did after the war in Paris, because in New York you could count on a "peaceful coexistence between abstraction and realism." Of course, even as Ashbery made that remark, the old '50s-style New York heterogeneity was collapsing in the face of an academic abstraction that Clement Greenberg insisted was the only viable alternative to the apotheosis of Duchamp. But if there is still a sympathetic audience, however small, for Hélion's work, it's an audience that senses the fundamental coherence of modern art as well as John Ashbery did when he was an American in Paris and Jean Hélion did years before when he was a Parisian in New York. Such insights are not bound by chronology or geography.

There's a great pattern that runs through twentieth-century art, for once an artist has recognized the essentially abstract character of all Western painting the naturalness of abstraction is a foregone conclusion. When the young man all the way to the right of *The Last Judgment* picks up the two pieces of a broken record, he's presenting us with a miniaturized, emblematic version of this story: the real thing has turned into an abstract thing that is of course also real. Instead of building a realist painting out of abstract elements, Hélion treats abstraction and representation as dynamic principles, neither of which can exist on its own. Hélion understood that modern art, which was a revolt against nineteenth-century official taste, was a decentering of taste that embraced populism and obscurantism and hedonism and asceticism, and he refused to reject any of the options. He believed that the hyperstimulating atmosphere of modern art's heroic days could continue unabated; he rejected the idea that what the avant-garde giveth the avant-garde taketh away.

In New York we're often told that the grand modern design has faded past retracing, and it's possible to argue that Hélion's view of the world as a flea market fits in with this sense of exhausted possibilities. Hélion confronts the confusion and the breakage and the loss, but he doesn't find it dispiriting. *The Last Judgment* is an optimistic allegory of the arts; Hélion regards the past not as a sinking monolith but a changeable landscape that he's delighted to encounter every day. Just open your eyes, he seems to be saying, and you'll find whatever you need: the real and the surreal, abstract signs and narrative situations. The possibilities are unlimited, only you must

ART SCENES *Galleries, Exhibits, and Events*

Private Art Dealers Association P.O. Box 872, Lenox Hill Station NYC, 10021, 212-741-7264. Not for profit membership organization comprised of over sixty Fine Art specialists. Appraisal Service for Charitable Donations and Probate Purposes. Membership directory available.

Jan Anderson NYC, 10024. *By appointment* 212-595-3648. Including works by Bourgeois, Celmins, Cumming, Diebenkorn, Dine, Hockney, Johns, LeWitt, Lichtenstein, Stella, Thiebaud and Wiley.

W.M. Brady & Co. 3 East 76th Street, NYC, 10021, 212-249-7212. Old Master and 19th Century Paintings and Drawings. Recent acquisitions include works by Bandinelli, Procaccini, van Dyck, G.B. Tiepolo, Prud'hon, Géricault, Delacroix, Ribot, Degas and a group of sketches by Hippolyte and Paul Flandrin.

Robert Dance, Inc. 101 West 55th Street, NYC, 10019, 212-977-5612. *By appointment.* Old Master Paintings and Drawings; Drawings available by: Cavalier d'Arpino, Zuccaro, Piola, Solimena, Marchesi, Cibo, many others.

Grete Meilman Fine Art, Ltd. 28 East 73rd Street, NYC, 10021, 212-570-9070. *By appointment.* American 19th and 20th Century Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture, including works by Carles, O'Keeffe, Hartley, Tooker and Others.

Jill Newhouse—Drawings and Watercolors 12 East 86th Street, NYC, 10028. *By appointment* 212-249-9216. Specializing in master drawings and watercolors of all periods. Catalogues available. Artwork bought and sold.

Schiller & Bodo 19 East 74th Street, NYC, 10021. *By appointment*, 212-772-8627. Specializing in fine 19th century European Paintings. BARBIZON: Corot, Bonheur, Daubigny, Harpignies. French, Italian, Belgian and Spanish academic, genre, still lifes: Bouguereau, Boldini, Croegaert, Garrido, Heilbuth, Verboeckhoven, others.

David and Constance Yates Post Office Box 580 Lenox Hill Station, NYC, 10021, telephone 212-870-7758, fax 212-794-4680. *Hours by appointment.* EUROPEAN DRAWINGS AND SCULPTURE. Recent acquisitions including a selection of medals, Renaissance through 19th Century. We are located in the East 60's near the Park Avenue Armory.

Art Scenes is a regular advertising service of *The New Republic* featuring art news and announcements. For further information or space reservations, please **contact** Jennifer Barrett at 202-331-7494. **Mail** your listing to: *Art Scenes, The New Republic*, 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Or **fax** the listing to 202-223-0566.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not allow yourself to be overwhelmed. In *The Last Judgment* people are thoughtful but not immobilized. They make their choices and move ahead.

Hélion's message isn't for the faint-hearted or the easily intimidated, and it's precisely his independent subversive spirit that's held the attention of renegade artists in New York from the '30s right down to the present. This is not the place to present the complicated history of his American impact, but it would be untrue to the inveterate optimism that Hélion inspired in others if I did not give at least one recent case in point. Only a few weeks before this show opened at Salander-O'Reilly, Barbara Goodstein had an exhibition of her recent painterly relief sculptures at the Bowery Gallery in which the near-abstract calligraphy of her landscapes and cityscapes presented a logical extension of the decisive brushwork in Hélion's later canvases. Goodstein has taken Hélion's strokes of paint, which suggest the broad outlines of an object, and reimagined them in dabs and slaps of modeling paste that are in fact precisely plotted acts of suppression—a refusal of detail so elegant that it feels celebratory. In the past Goodstein has done some variations on Hélion's themes, and looking at her triumphantly self-assured new work, in which she occasionally includes found objects such as bits of broken colored glass and rusty metal, it's possible to feel that she is quite literally moving forward from *The Last Judgment of Things*. What really count are the deep structural affinities, the sense that what's abstract and what's real are both aspects of the same still-unfolding pattern.

The Last Judgment is full of patterns and tools and machines: there's a key, an easel, the dressmaker's mannequins, a sewing machine, eyeglasses, a record player, an LP record, a pair of drumsticks, some musical instruments. You could say that it's a how-to manual for artists—and a celebration of creativity, of putting things together. The shoe fits, the broken things can be mended, a young painter gets a bargain on an easel that he'll take home so that he can paint his first masterpiece. And then there's that mysterious spiral staircase, with its tight, corkscrew curve. Once you've taken in the bits of clothing casually deposited on the steps, you know that you've been left to imagine what's going on upstairs. This is a painting that gets the mind working overtime. The colors are bright and taut and changeable; they seem to fly along, with some of the gravity-defying speed of ships' sails caught by the wind. Hélion is telling us that the possibilities are wide open and the sky is the limit. •

Ordinary Monsters

By Omer Bartov

Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust by Daniel Jonah Goldhagen

(Knopf, 619 pp., $30)

Even before the Nazi murder machine ground to a halt under the pressure of the greatest military alliance ever assembled, scholars, intellectuals and thinking people throughout the world began applying themselves to the crucial question: How was "the nation of Goethe and Schiller" transformed into a barbarous, genocidal dictatorship, and what was at the root of the Third Reich's attempt to annihilate the Jews? Since 1945, the constant preoccupation with this central event of the twentieth century has produced a virtual flood of explanations, interpretations and theories, historical monographs and biographies, psychological analyses and personal memoirs, works of fiction and documentaries. If this immense intellectual effort has until now failed to yield a wholly satisfactory answer, it has not been for lack of trying. The difficulty can be traced back to the horror and the complexity and the magnitude of the event itself. The Holocaust is not ineffable and unexplainable. But no single explanation or representation seems to encompass the phenomenon as a whole.

The attempts to explain Nazism and the Holocaust have followed very different paths. In 1945, the British historian A.J.P. Taylor published a book titled *The Course of German History*, in which he traced the roots of Nazism all the way back to Luther. As far as Taylor was concerned (at least at the time: he changed his opinion later), the German penchant for authoritarianism, obedience and brutality was already a long-established fact by the time Hitler came to power; it was this special path of German history that explained the horrors of the Third Reich. This notion of a special path was elaborated upon and greatly expanded in numerous studies by German scholars in the 1960s and 1970s, and it became known as the *Sonderweg* theory. Hans-Ulrich Wehler, one of the most prominent proponents of this theory, claimed that Germany had taken a different turn in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and thereby developed unique and pernicious traits which made it increasingly different from more "normal" Western societies such as Britain and France. It was this abnormality of German history, reflected in its political, social and economic structure, that was at the root of Nazism's "seizure of power."

While many German historians spent the better part of two decades debating and finally rejecting the *Sonderweg* theory, other scholars, mainly Marxist ones, proposed that the Holocaust was merely an aspect of European fascism, which was itself seen as one of the death throes of capitalism. Still others, among whom Hannah Arendt stands out most prominently, asserted that genocide was inherent to what they called the totalitarian state, which was most perfectly represented by Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union. Conversely, many Jewish historians, such as Shmuel Ettinger and Shmuel Almog, argued that the Holocaust must be traced back to the Christian-European tradition of anti-Semitism. Acknowledging the transformation of traditional religious and socioeconomic anti-Jewish sentiments into political and racial anti-Semitism in the late nineteenth century, such scholars of Jewish history nevertheless argued that no structural interpretation of Nazism and the Holocaust was plausible without admitting the central role of a pernicious anti-Jewish imagery, theology and demagoguery, dating back to the Middle Ages and greatly enhanced by the pseudo-scientific discourse of social-Darwinism and eugenics in the modern era.

Over the years, many other theories and interpretations have been proposed. The so-called "intentionalist" school, best represented by Lucy Dawidowicz and Gerald Fleming, placed Hitler and his maniacal anti-Semitism at the center of the debate, arguing that the intention to murder all the Jews of Europe had always been on the future Führer's mind, at least

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as early as 1920, and that the actual timing of the "Final Solution" was merely a matter of waiting for the most appropriate circumstances, rather than the result of any evolution in Hitler's thinking or the nature of his regime. Conversely, the "functionalist" school, whose best-known proponents were Martin Broszat and Hans Mommsen, insisted on the centrality of structural factors, arguing that, while the Nazis pursued an obviously anti-Semitic policy, they reached the decision to commit mass murder only at the end of a long period of indecision and after failed plans of expulsion, under circumstances of total war and logistical havoc. And they did so in a process of "cumulative radicalization" which characterized a regime whose most typical feature was its "polycratic" structure, whereby competing bureaucratic agencies vied for the attention of the Führer by offering ever more extreme solutions to insoluble problems.

In recent years there has been a tremendous surge of interest in the Holocaust, expressed in numerous films, novels, museums and, not least, works of scholarship. Much of the new scholarship on Nazism and the Holocaust has been of remarkable quality, making use of newly discovered documents and new methodologies. New interpretations, based on extensive archival research, of the origins and course of Nazi Germany's eugenic, racial, demographic and genocidal policies, by such scholars as Michael Burleigh and Ian Kershaw in Britain, Christopher Browning and Gordon Horwitz in the United States, and Götz Aly and Hannes Heer in Germany, have made it necessary to revise our understanding of the Holocaust and its perpetrators. Similarly, works on the memory and representation of the event, its impact on the survivors, and its use and abuse by states and various political interests, written by such scholars as Lawrence Langer, Berel Lang, James Young and Saul Friedlander, have greatly deepened our knowledge of the victims, the bystanders and the role of commemoration in the post-Auschwitz era.

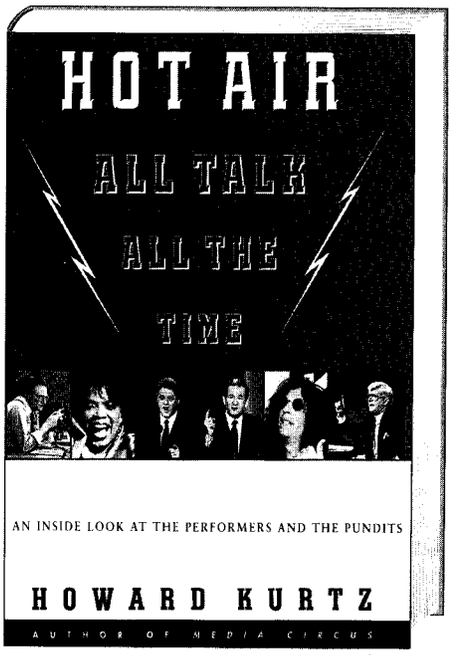
Hitler's Willing Executioners is a big and ambitious work. It is big in every respect: its physical size, its historical reach, the magnitude of the audience that it seeks to attract, the volume of scholarship that it dismisses, the intensity and the scale of its condemnation and, not least, its sense of its own importance. Daniel Jonah Goldhagen makes big claims, disdaining qualifications and subtleties, often making sweeping generalizations so as not to allow any culprits to get away. The writing is passionate, often angry. The book is almost

Find out why politicians keep sucking up to Imus and how Buchanan used "Crossfire" to launch his campaign.

"The definitive book on the talk-show explosion."
—David Remnick, *The New Yorker*

"Delicious to read, puncturing the pompousness, fatuousness, and ethical backsliding that have indeed crept into America's media."
—*Business Week*

"A new, important, sophisticated book about talk shows."
—A.M. Rosenthal, *The New York Times*



http://www.randomhouse.com/
TIMES BOOKS

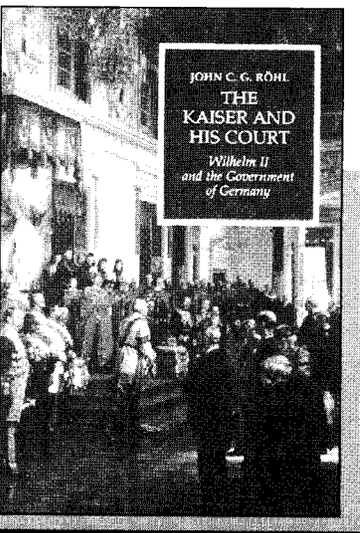
Now in Paperback...

The Kaiser and His Court
Wilhelm II and the Government of Germany

John C. G. Röhl

*"Mr. Röhl writes with the concision and delight in language of a poet and with the rigor and infectious love of documents of the true historian. The style and structure of his book increase its accessibility to general readers....*The Kaiser and His Court *is solid and speculative; it is cautious and provocative. It is brilliant history."*
– Washington Times

56504-9 Paperback $18.95



Available in bookstores or from
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

40 West 20th Street,
New York, NY 10011-4211
Call toll-free 800-872-7423
MasterCard/VISA accepted.
Prices subject to change.
Web site: http://www.cup.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

obsessively repetitive, hammering the same point over and over again.

Goldhagen's book takes up some very important issues. In some of its parts, it makes a useful contribution and provides a necessary correction to the existing literature. But precisely because it is so replete with wrath, accusations, finger-pointing, insinuations and self-righteousness, it does a disservice to the considerable work invested in researching and writing it and to the issues it seeks to introduce into the debate. This is history in black and white, and it will please those impatient with careful argument and the weighing of evidence. As for scholars who have spent a lifetime of research and writing on Nazism and the Holocaust, I am afraid that its dismissive attitude toward their work will make it exceedingly difficult for them to sympathize with its more important arguments.

Goldhagen makes a powerful case for a version of one of the oldest, most traditional, and in recent years largely discredited interpretations of the Holocaust. He should be praised for his courage in doing so. Paradoxically, he also claims to present a wholly new interpretation of the event, which will supersede anything that has been written so far. This bewildering claim for originality is based on his insistence that he is the very first scholar ever to have written on the perpetrators; that he can thereby, and for the very first time, conclusively demonstrate that the vast majority of the German population were murderers, actually or potentially; and that, in contradiction to an alleged scholarly consensus, he can finally prove that the main moving engine, the principal motivation, the factor that explains all facets of the Holocaust, was European anti-Semitism in general, and its specific German variety in particular.

There is nothing original in claiming that anti-Semitism was at the core of the Holocaust. Moreover, quite apart from the voluminous scholarship that has advanced this assertion over the years, this has always been the "common sense" view in much of Europe, the United States and Israel. Not surprisingly, it has always been the opinion of traditional Jews and remains the single most influential interpretation of what orthodox Jews (and a considerable number of secular Hebrew-speakers) call the *churban*, or the Destruction. Associating the Holocaust with the destruction of the Temple (*churban beit ha'mikdash*), and linking both to the eternal hatred of the Gentiles for the Jews (and to the Jews' sins against God), is crucial to the interpretation of the Nazi genocide by a community which would otherwise have to confront the question of God's tolerance of, if not direct complicity in, the near-total destruction of His people.

This being said, however, it is not necessary to claim originality of interpretation in order to stress once more the importance of anti-Semitism, in its traditional and modern, racist forms, as an arguably crucial and (in recent mainstream scholarship) somewhat underemphasized condition of the Holocaust. Still, anti-Semitism as such is not a sufficient condition for explaining the specific nature of the Nazi-attempted genocide of the Jews. That many Germans were imbued with anti-Semitic ideas and images, especially after years of exposure to Nazi propaganda and indoctrination, may seem obvious, but it needs reiterating in view of several influential interpretations of Nazism and the Holocaust which have generally downplayed this factor. In this sense, Goldhagen is quite right to bring back the old argument on the demonization of the Jews as playing a significant role in their barbarous treatment by individual Germans, as well as in legitimizing their persecution and ultimate mass murder for much of the German population.

Unfortunately, Goldhagen does not give due credit to the many studies that have probed the political radicalization and ideological indoctrination of several important sectors of German society, such as the youth, the army, the veterans of the First World War and the *Freikorps* paramilitary units of the 1920s, that is, those elements of society in the interwar years which provided the bulk of Hitler's perpetrators. By referring to other studies which have similarly stressed the importance of ideological motivation and the mobilization of prejudice by the Nazi regime, not least among the soldiers of the *Wehrmacht*, Goldhagen might have had to surrender his claim of originality, but his book would have gained a great deal in subtlety of argument.

Since his ambition is to rewrite the history of the Holocaust, Goldhagen devotes the first part (about 100 pages) to a survey of European and German anti-Semitism before Hitler's "seizure of power." These chapters do not add much to our knowledge of anti-Semitism, nor do they do much justice to the subject. Reading them, one might believe that the historical process of Jewish emancipation and assimilation into European culture never took place; that the great cultural surge within Jewish communities throughout Europe, and particularly in Germany, in the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, is a myth and that the Holocaust was already on the minds of the majority of Europeans, or at least Germans, since 1848 at the very latest. If we are to accept Goldhagen's version, German Jews were either blind or downright stupid, since the writing was on the wall for 100 years and their whole existence was founded on an illusion. This view of the past also confronts us with serious problems about the present, since what Goldhagen calls "eliminationist anti-Semitism," the forerunner of its exterminationist version, appears to have totally vanished from Germany after 1945.

To say that this is the first study of the perpetrators is, to use the term that Goldhagen applies to most of the historical interpretations that he criticizes in his book, simply false. Indeed, as with his chapters on anti-Semitism, Goldhagen himself refers to several studies which have devoted a great deal of work to the perpetrators on all levels of the Nazi murder regime. An important book published only last year in Germany, Götz Aly's *Endlösung*, makes precisely the same claim, though Aly's interpretation of the Holocaust is almost exactly the opposite of Goldhagen's, presenting as it does a rather sophisticated and complex version of the functionalist thesis, based on a mass of hitherto unknown documents. Whether we accept Aly's or Goldhagen's interpretations (and both of them are problematic and far too polarized), neither is justified in his claim of originality.

Yet Goldhagen's dilemma is greater than Aly's, since the latter has identified one group of perpetrators about whom relatively little was known until he turned his attention to them, namely, the middle-ranking Nazi bureaucrats who were involved in planning the massive resettlement of ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) in western Poland who simultaneously organized the expulsion, concentration and finally murder of the Jews from those same areas, along with large numbers of non-Jewish Poles (who were, however, not slated for extermination). Goldhagen, by contrast, is concerned with a type of perpetrator about whom one of the foremost historians of the Holocaust, Christopher Browning, has already published an important study. It is no coincidence, in fact, that Browning's book is called *Ordinary Men* and Goldhagen's is called *Ordinary Germans*.

On the most basic level, Goldhagen's book is a reply to, and an attempt to refute, Browning's thesis, using to a large extent the same documentation but drawing different conclusions from it. (Goldhagen reviewed Browning's book in these pages.) There is nothing unusual in two scholars reaching different conclusions from the same sources. What is disturbing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is not only that Goldhagen asserts repeatedly the originality of his sources, but that at the same time he makes unwarranted and unfair attacks on Browning, insinuating that for some reason or another Browning had not used certain documents which did not sustain his thesis, documents which, had they been cited, irrefutably show Goldhagen's view to be the only possible one. Goldhagen launches not merely a debate over interpretation, but also an attack on the scholarly integrity of another historian, made in countless notes throughout the text and hinting at some unspoken fault, some illicit sympathy.

And what is the debate all about? Browning has investigated the police battalions used by the Nazi regime to perpetrate mass killing on Jewish communities in Poland between 1941 and 1943. His research concentrated especially on the Hamburg Reserve Police Battalion 101, which was composed of relatively elderly men who had been exposed only to a minimal degree of Nazi indoctrination and showed no signs of being enthusiastic supporters of Hitler. This was not a unit normally associated with the death-squads or *Einsatzgruppen* of the SS and the SD. At least at the beginning of its murder activities, moreover, the men were given the option not to take an active part in the killing. And yet they became mass murderers. Browning's explanation of this phenomenon is that these "ordinary men" became acclimatized to mass killing during the first few murder operations and ended up (with few exceptions) viewing them as part of a job, distasteful as it might have been to some of them, which they had to carry out. In Browning's account, it was not beliefs but circumstances which made ordinary men into killers.

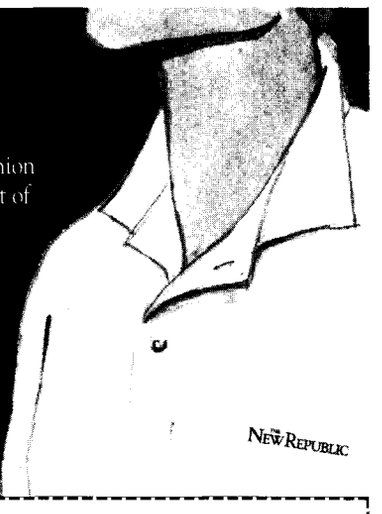
Goldhagen has also studied Police Battalion 101, along with some other units for which there apparently exists less documentation. Employing the same evidence regarding the manpower composition of this unit, he claims that these perpetrators, precisely because they were spared massive indoctrination owing to their age, are the best illustration of the fact that they were not ordinary men but ordinary Germans. That is, that they were representative of German society, which had internalized "eliminationist" and therefore potentially exterminationist anti-Semitism long before Hitler came to power. Goldhagen stresses that its members could avoid participation in the killing, and so they killed, in his view, not because of their circumstances but because of their hatred of Jews. Most of them not only enjoyed killing, as Goldhagen shows, they also tortured their victims horribly before finally murdering them.

It is quite possible, of course, to stake out a third position, one which stresses a crucial factor neglected both by Browning's circumstantial interpretation and by Goldhagen's essentialist view, namely the powerful impact of ideology and indoctrination on the perpetrators. I agree with Goldhagen that it is more than likely that many of these killers were motivated by anti-Semitic sentiments and truly believed that it was necessary to kill Jews. Yet to say that they represented all Germans in the Third Reich, and, even more radically, that they were representative of widespread German sentiments even before Hitler's regime, is a judgment that is impossible to prove and is too farfetched to be of any analytical or historical value. I have myself disagreed with Browning's diminishment of ideological motivation among the perpetrators (and have stressed its importance in my own work on German soldiers); yet as his meticulous research demonstrates (and as my own work on the brutalization of soldiers also indicates), one cannot dismiss the reality of acclimatization to murder by repeated involvement in it.

Goldhagen does not present sufficient evidence to refute this claim, and his argument that we cannot believe the perpetrators' assertions about their initial reluctance to kill in testimonies given twenty years later is highly problematic for the simple reason that his own study is based almost exclusively on those same testimonies. There is a great deal of evidence to show that a dehumanized view of Jews (and Russians, Bolsheviks, Gypsies, Poles and others) did play an important role in motivating Hitler's murderers. But Goldhagen's own evidence suggests (along with much more documentation that he does not cite) that this view was internalized largely during the Third Reich. Even if the perpetrators on whom Goldhagen has chosen to focus were in their late 30s, they had nevertheless spent many years under Hitler's rule and were exposed to massive propaganda, before they set out to kill the Jews (as Robert Gellately has shown in his work on the Gestapo). To be sure, Nazi ideology was most successful where it made use of existing prejudices; anti-Semitism, as well as fear of Slavs and Bolsheviks, was widespread before 1933, though how widespread is difficult to gauge, and whether it differed from such sentiments, say, in Poland, is doubtful. But it was only in the Third Reich that these sentiments were given the sanction of the regime and could be provided with the impetus of a

THE NEW REPUBLIC
POLO SHIRT

The New Republic is proud to present the ultimate fashion statement: *The New Republic* Polo shirt. Fashioned out of 100% cotton and custom embroidered with our logo, *The New Republic* polo will become the staple of your casual wardrobe. It also makes the perfect gift for TNR aficionados on your shopping list. *The New Republic* polo is available in crisp white with the logo embroidered in navy blue, in adult sizes small, medium and large. Only $24.50 per shirt plus $3.25 for first class shipping. Satisfaction guaranteed! Order yours today.



Name _____
Phone _____
Shipping Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Qty. ____ Size (S,M,L) _____ Total Price _____

To order, call toll-free
1-800-875-9151
(M-F, 9-5 EST)

If using Visa, MC or AMEX, please provide the following information:
Account Number _____ Expiration Date _____
Signature _____

Mail this form along with check or money order made payable to
TNR Polo Shirt Offer, 1220 19th St, N.W., Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20036

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Easter Morning Aubade

She tried to clench the first dawnlight *inside her skull.*
Tried to feel it slather in there and make a form.
Felt the meadows the light held inside its flowing coat,
sewn into there, silkiest lining—the seams, the property-lines perfect—
and pulled them in, and lay them down along the floor of it.
There was a green hill with a thin white road, that she lay in.
There was a speckling, as where cypress have been struck, in rows,
to indicate approach, and then a temporary house—she drove those in
and lay them flat in there. She heard the word *temporary*. She felt her eyes,
their tiny weights, and how there was, in fact, no glancing *out*.
Outside, further away,
the soldiers slept. Sun was beginning to graze their fingertips—
and a lance protruding, and an elbow where it rammed itself in sleep—
light pouring down the difference,
yet without waking them,
though waking up their forms.
Behind them, still misty now, the two dimensional, like a thin god, rose—
nothing could keep it—it had no feet on the ground—
a thing round which nothing could swirl,
the hooks of light unable to find hold upon its garment,
so that it could not be pulled into the furrows of the skull,
in over the rooftile she now brought in,
and the shields the sleepers let glide,
or the birch trees touched black at every branch on one side,
or the wire-mesh through which the *white* of five chickens hives...
The intervals grow deep.
One of the soldiers rubs his face,
streamings-of-thought starting to glide all over him,
sticky frantics from the network clotting all round,
thickenings, varyings,
in which the possibility of shapeliness begins to rave,
brightening most at those edges where the skull feels itself to be
inside of something which it cannot see—
as where the lips can be felt, for instance—
and the wide light along those lips,
and the 800 mph rotational spin of the earth leaning in on them,
the interweaving of dust with nonparticulate matter, with love, with the small stone falling
from the hand of the child leaning over the bridge down there,
up past the soldier's right shoulder, but small, because far away,
and the stone's lip as it curls the surface round it for an instant,
and the displacement of galactic matter round the orbit of the sun—is that right?—
the child's face as the light of *effect* gathers upon it
and the stone sinks,
the thin liplike suctions of the waters closing over it,
and how to his mind it is taken in, swallowed,
how he turns to see if it will reappear on the other side or will be carried away,
and how *forever* comes to mind, bells starting to ring in the morninglight,
and how he goes back to the place where the stone disappeared and stares for a while,
me watching to see what will dawn on his face,
bells from three churches now across the valley, almost in synch but then there is time,
and how as he stares I can see
that the place of the disappearance has disappeared,
it cannot be recovered, his eyes darting over the moving waters,
and how a life cannot be lived therefore, as there is no place,
in which the possibility of shapeliness begins to rave,
and the soldiers awakening, of course, to the blazing *not-there*,
and the 30,000 mph of the sun's going
rubbing its disappearance now all over this,
and the hand going back into the dirt at one's feet, fingers feeling around
for another perfect stone, wanting to see it once again, that opening.

JORIE GRAHAM

sophisticated propaganda machine wielded by a modern state.

Moreover, it would have been useful to contextualize the case of the police battalions by reference to regular army soldiers who massacred vast numbers of non-Jewish Russians, along with Poles, Serbs, Greeks, Italians, and so forth. This is important precisely because of Goldhagen's insistence on the disproportionate attention paid to the death camps in Holocaust scholarship and the need to focus more closely on murder units such as the police battalions that he has studied (a problematic assertion to which I will return). The soldiers carried out their "tasks" efficiently and often willingly. At the same time, as Mark Mazower has shown, there were also complaints about the demoralizing effects of massacring, especially the massacring of women and children.

This does not mean that the troops were not motivated by powerful prejudices, reinforced by years of ideological indoctrination and brutalization by image and deed. It does mean, however, that anti-Semitism is not sufficient as a single factor in explaining the conduct of individual German soldiers, policemen, SS or SD men, or anyone involved in murder during that period. It is much more convincing to argue that such actions were the result of a cluster of conditions, some ideological and some existential, some reality and others rooted in a distorted perception of it. No single element can explain this terrible phenomenon. We wish that it could, on the assumption that by doing away with that element we could eliminate

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the possibility of such brutality altogether. But much that has happened since the end of the Holocaust demonstrates that massacres and genocides can find many reasons to occur.

In order to further substantiate his case that "ordinary" Germans were imbued with a blind hatred of Jews and were therefore all potential torturers and murderers simply waiting for the opportunity to vent their wild passions on the victims, Goldhagen devotes several chapters to the labor camps and the death marches during the last months and weeks of the Nazi regime. Dismissing a whole body of literature on the relationship between Nazi demographic policies, forced labor and extermination as "false," he proceeds to demonstrate that labor camps were only one more example of the Germans' desire to humiliate, to torture and to kill Jews. He provides some horrifying and hitherto unknown information on a number of labor camps and makes a strong case for the barbarity of the guards. And he provides distu bing and (to my knowledge) previously unpublished information on some specific death marches at the end of the war, mostly culled from testimonies by perpetrators given in the 1960s, and shows that even when left to their own devices, even when ordered by Himmler himself (for his own selfish reasons) no longer to mistreat Jews, the guards of these senseless marches behaved in the most atrocious manner.

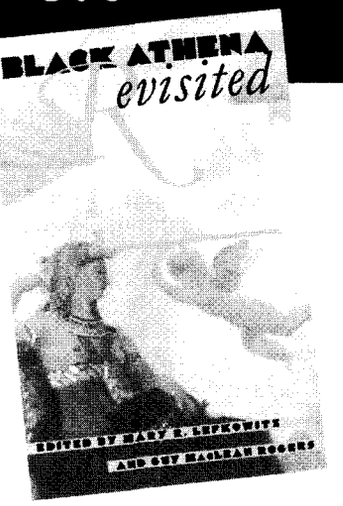
And yet it is not at all clear that these cases actually sustain Goldhagen's thesis. His repeated question—why did the Nazis treat the Jews so terribly?—sounds strangely naïve and out of place. The men and the women about whom he writes were involved in a genocidal undertaking, unprecedented in its ferocity and its scale. They were obviously under the influence of a good measure of Nazi ideology, exposure to endless barbarities, and circumstances which brought out in them the most base instincts, while facing victims who had been reduced to a condition in which they appeared to resemble precisely the kind of *Untermenschen* that Nazi propaganda had always claimed them to be. Moreover, there are serious contradictions within Goldhagen's account. While arguing that these brutal killers were merely "ordinary Germans," he presents not a few killers who were either ethnic Germans, that is, men and women who had been raised and educated far from the culture he claims to have been imbued with a unique brand of "eliminationist anti-Semitism," or non-Germans, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, and so forth. To be sure, these perpetrators were probably at least as anti-Semitic as the Germans. But then what are we to do with Goldhagen's argument about the specificity of German anti-Semitism?

Even more problematic, perhaps, is the fact that, in his zeal to show the inhumanity of all Germans, Goldhagen notes that the guards of the death marches refused to allow the starving Jews to eat food thrown to them by the inhabitants of the towns through which they passed. He does not remark upon the rather obvious fact that the people who threw that food to the Jews were also "ordinary" Germans. Such acts of kindness were probably rare occurrences, though Goldhagen cites a surprisingly high number of such cases; but they do indicate that some Germans, even as late as 1945, recognized Jewish victims to be human beings.

The most troubling aspect of Goldhagen's book is its contention that "ordinary" Germans belonged to a wholly extraordinary people, a people unlike any other, which had been that way for the better part of a century. He cites the *Sonderweg* thesis approvingly as still further proof of his thesis, but in fact his argument differs greatly from the German original: the proponents of the "special path" had stressed structural factors, while he rejects those out of hand and emphasizes the mental makeup of the German psyche, an argument entirely foreign to the body of scholarship to which he refers. Goldhagen's view of Germany cannot be sustained by evidence, and like all essentialist views it does not require evidence; it is inimical to strictly historical analysis. People may well act as they do because of what they are; but tautology rarely makes for good history.

And what are the implications of such a notion that there exists a nation of ingrained murderers? How useful is this assumption for explaining an historical phenomenon? To what extent is this a bizarre inversion of the Nazi view of the Jews as an insidious, inherently evil nation? At one point Goldhagen himself seems to recognize the danger in his argument. He remarks in a footnote that the Germans since 1945 are different, having somehow gone through a rapid process of democratization and denazification which transformed them almost overnight into normal (ordinary?) men and women. But this is only a footnote. We are left with the thesis that the Germans were normally monsters, and that the only role of the Nazi regime was to furnish them with the opportunity to act on their evil desires. This is not a new idea. It was, quite naturally, entertained by many of their victims. But as an historical explanation of a specific event it is useless, and not really historical at all.

Was Western civilization founded by ancient Egyptians?



Black Athena Revisited

Edited by Mary R. Lefkowitz and Guy MacLean Rogers

In this collection of twenty essays, leading scholars in a broad range of disciplines confront the claims made by Martin Bernal in *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization.* In that work, Bernal proposed a radical reinterpretation of the roots of classical civilization, contending that ancient Greek culture derived from Egypt and Phoenicia and that European scholars have been biased against the notion of Egyptian and Phoenician influence on Western civilization. The contributors to this volume argue that Bernal's claims are exaggerated and in many cases unjustified.

Topics covered include race and physical anthropology; the question of an Egyptian invasion of Greece; the origins of Greek language, philosophy, and science; and racism and anti-Semitism in classical scholarship.

544 pp. $55 cloth / $19.95 paper

at bookstores or by toll-free order
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS
Chapel Hill
Phone (800) 848-6224, Fax (800) 272-6817
http://sunsite.unc.edu/uncpress/

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In this sense, although Goldhagen has attempted to combine a long-term context for his thesis with what he claims to be a "thick" description of the perpetrators' actions, his book is in fact an entirely decontextualized interpretation of the Holocaust. It fails to confront the central question of the Nazi genocide, with which those very scholars he dismisses so nonchalantly have tried (with varying degrees of success) to grapple for so long—namely, what was it that made the Holocaust a wholly unprecedented event in human history *and* an event which was part and parcel of the specific historical conditions from which it evolved? For genocides are anything but a new phenomenon. Brutality, mass killings, torture, sadism, and everything that Goldhagen is at pains to describe in gory detail are as old as humanity itself. And as new: it suffices to recall the recent butcheries in Rwanda and Bosnia to see that these particular aspects of the Holocaust are anything but unique. What was—and remains—unprecedented about the Holocaust is a wholly different matter, which Goldhagen avoids treating: the industrial killing of millions of human beings in factories of death, ordered by a modern state, organized by a conscientious bureaucracy, and supported by a law-abiding, patriotic, "civilized" society.

Never before, or after, has a state decided to devote so many of its technological, organizational and intellectual resources to the sole purpose of murdering every single member of a certain category of people in a process that combined the knowledge acquired in mass industrial production with the experience of waging total war. This was a novel phenomenon: striving to produce corpses with the same methods employed to produce goods. In this case, however, destruction was the *goal* of production, not its opposite.

In circumstances of mass murder, sadism flourishes; but sadism is not unique to the Holocaust. Anti-Semitism is a pernicious phenomenon with long historical roots, but the question remains as to how it was employed in creating and legitimating death camps rather than expressed in savage pogroms. We need to probe much deeper into the culture that produced genocide in the heart of European civilization. What was it that induced Nobel Prize-winning scientists, internationally respected legal scholars, physicians known throughout the world for their research into the human body and their desire to ameliorate the lot of humanity, to become not merely opportunistic accomplices, but in many ways the initiators and promoters of this attempt to subject the human race to a vast surgical operation by means of mass extermination of whole categories of human beings? What was there (or is there) in our culture that made the concept of transforming humanity by means of eugenic and racial cleansing seem so practical and rational? And how was all this related to the immense advances in science over the preceding century, the widespread disenchantment with some aspects of modernity, and, not least, the mass slaughter of Europeans on the battlefields of the Great War in 1914-18?

These are all critical questions that Goldhagen fails to treat, and so his book cannot claim by any stretch of the imagination to be a new interpretation of the Holocaust. It is a useful study of some aspects of the genocide of the Jews, aspects which have many common features with other genocides throughout history. Indeed, by focusing on these events, Goldhagen undermines his own claim regarding the uniqueness of the Holocaust, for his book completely misses precisely those aspects of the genocide which have made it stand out as unprecedented even in the bloodiest century humanity has seen; and by doing so it fails to demonstrate any understanding for the profound and continuing relevance of the industrial killing perfected by the Nazis for our own societies.

Goldhagen believes that he has cut straight through the tortuous and often contradictory arguments of a vast amount of scholarship and given us the clear, simple, strangely comforting answer for which we had all been longing. He is wrong. By eschewing subtlety and nuance, and by mistaking passion for an impatience with complexity, Goldhagen is actually appealing to a public that wants to hear what it already believes. By doing so, he obscures the fact that the Holocaust was too murky and too horrible to be reduced to simplistic interpretations that rob it of its pertinence to our own time.

OMER BARTOV is the author of *Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* and *Murder in Our Midst: The Holocaust, Industrial Killing, and Representation*, both from Oxford University Press.

All Noisy on the Western Front

BY LAVINIA GREENLAW

The Ghost Road by Pat Barker

(Dutton, 276 pp., $21.95)

The authenticity of history is useful to writers of fiction. It can be challenged or invoked; and its scale can be adjusted to amplify or to diminish human drama, either way providing props, backdrops and special effects at comparatively little imaginative cost. The dangers are obvious: fiction is authenticated by its evidence of research—details of the real place, people, technology. Anecdotes and arcane practices impress us primarily because they are "real."

The First World War has been extensively treated in fiction. Some of the most influential novels of this century were written in its aftermath, several by those who had fought: *All Quiet On The Western Front, The Good Soldier Schweik, A Farewell to Arms.* (Even Hemingway saw a month's action before getting blown up.) A sense of disintegration and the unimaginable characterized the contemporary artistic response. The struggle to find adequate language resulted in its renewal through being broken open or pared right down.

In the 1990s, however, there can be no such struggle when writing about the First World War, no such sense of renewal. We have enjoyed decades of retrospective consensus: known good and evil, agreed right and wrong. Yet we are seeing a strange revival of interest among novelists in the subject. This may be a matter of timing, of opportunism: the war represents both a lost world and the beginnings of the place in which we now live; ancient enough to be history and recent enough to be inherited.

When writers now turn to the First World War, they must find some way of disturbing dust that is thickly settled. Otherwise they make costume drama, something too integrated and too imaginable. The British novelist Pat Barker has chosen to write a trilogy on the war. Her concerns are not those of drama and history, but of psychology and society. Still, these three novels do not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

escape the dangers inherent in historical fiction, and particularly the problems which flow from the size and the familiarity of their subject.

Barker's early novels, based on the world of the British working-class women of her childhood, were acclaimed for their authenticity, so much so that their author felt they were being read more as sociology than fiction. So she set out deliberately to write beyond her established and expected territory as a "northern, regional, working-class feminist," and produced a trilogy of novels about the lives of a group of officers who were patients in the same psychiatric hospital during the First World War (*Regeneration*, *The Eye in the Door* and, most recently, *The Ghost Road*). From a subject (working-class womanhood) that traditionally had little voice, Barker chose one which, as she has said, "has whole libraries devoted to it." She has made good use of them: most of the characters, and many of the events, are historical. The setting of the first book, *Regeneration*, is Craiglockhart Hospital outside Edinburgh, where the doctors include the pioneering anthropologist and neurologist W.H.R. Rivers, and where among the patients are the poets Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon.

The symbolism of these three real-life figures is elaborated upon in the trilogy by appearances from or references to a number of equally famous radicals, each of whom is an obvious motif for a particular ethical dilemma, social stance or milieu. Robert Graves, Bertrand Russell, Ottoline Morrell, Sigmund Freud, Oscar Wilde, H.G. Wells, Richard Dadd and Charles Dodgson all make appearances. This is not altogether successful. The attempt to animate these personalities is hampered by the reader's prior knowledge and preconceptions, while passing allusions to a renowned pacifist or psychotic also read, irritatingly, as shorthand for what a writer should try more originally to evoke.

It is where Barker is less self-consciously factual, less awed by her research and more confident of her fiction, that the books come to life. *Regeneration* opens with Siegfried Sassoon publicly stating his refusal, in 1917, to take any further part in the war and condemning the futility of the continuing slaughter. He is diagnosed as shell-shocked and consigned to Craiglockhart to be "cured." Rivers embarks on a gentle and gentlemanly analysis, even arranging for Sassoon to go to his Club. At the same time, Rivers also begins treatment of the belligerent Billy Prior, a working-class officer or "temporary

dissent

"The most useful political magazine in the U.S. today."
— Richard Rorty

In the Spring 1996 issue, read:

• David Gordon on America's bloated corporations
• Richard Rorty on Michael Lind
• A Special Section on Race and Politics,
with articles by
David Garrow, Martin Kilson,
Phillip Richards, and Carol Stack

Subscription: ☐ $22/year ☐ $40/two years ☐ Single copy: $7.50

☐ Check enclosed (drawn on U.S. currency). Add $7/year for postage outside the U.S.

☐ Bill me ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard Signature _____

Card No._____ Expiration Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

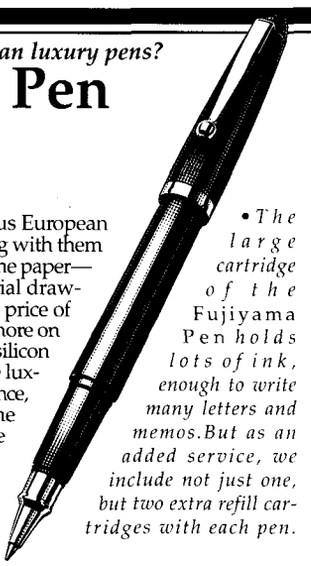
Dissent, 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Does this Asian model outperform famous European luxury pens?

Fujiyama™ Ceramic Pen

still only $39.95*

But read this ad for an even better deal!



If you've ever had occasion to write with one of the famous European pens, you know what marvelous products they are. Writing with them is a joy. It is almost effortless. The pen appears to float across the paper—even your thoughts seem to flow more freely. The substantial drawback, however, as with so many other nice things, is that the price of these luxury pens is awfully high. It's easy to spend $150 or more on one of them. Our Asian friends, aided by advanced German silicon cartridge technology, have created their own version of these luxury pens. They are equally pleasing and quite similar in appearance, heft and feel. They have the same hi-lacquer finish, the same fine gold-tone accents and the same gold-plated clip as those famous European luxury pens. The exclusive ceramic writing tip provides silk-smooth, effortless writing. It will never flatten, stall or skip, even after hardest and longest use.

The most remarkable thing about the *Fujiyama Ceramic Pen* is its price. We are the exclusive distributors and are therefore able to offer it for just $39.95. But, we have an even better deal: ***Buy two for $79.90, and we'll send you a third one, with our compliments—absolutely FREE!*** Discard those tacky ballpoint pens and those clumsy felt tips. Write smoothly and easily, give character and good appearance to your writing. And make a really great buy, an even greater one if you take advantage of our 3-for-2 "better deal". Get with it—get your *Fujiyama Ceramic Pen(s)* today!

• *The large cartridge of the* Fujiyama Pen *holds lots of ink, enough to write many letters and memos. But as an added service, we include not just one, but two extra refill cartridges with each pen.*

FOR FASTEST SERVICE, ORDER
TOLL FREE (800) 797-7367
24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a Week.

For Customer Service and for wholesale/premium quantity orders, please call 415-543-6675.

Please give order **#1004C221** for Fujiyama Ceramic Pen(s). We need daytime phone # for all orders. Add $4.95 standard shipping/insurance charge (plus sales tax for California delivery). You have 30-day return and one-year warranty. We do not refund shipping charges.

since 1967
haverhills®
185 Berry Street, San Francisco, CA 94107

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gentleman," who is intelligent and articulate, aspiring to amorality but with a weakness for big ideas. He proves a perturbing patient for Rivers, whom he mimics, teases and confronts, making for far more interesting reading than the mutually admiring and self-consciously understated exchanges of Rivers and Sassoon. The contrast between the two characters is instructive: it is as if Barker knows how Sassoon should speak but can let Prior find out for himself.

The First World War has been saturated in popular imagery; in addition to its literature, there is the more pervasive influence of the war movie. Alas, aspects of *Regeneration* bring these common influences to mind. As Sassoon agonizes over his position with the languid elegance of a cinematic hero and Robert Graves rushes to help with the bluff efficiency and dogged devotion of the hero's best friend, the dialogue seems disturbingly secondhand, as if, while written in one medium, it has been sieved through another—the book of the film of the war. Barker's dialogue becomes more convincing, but her narrative often takes the form of indirect speech that wobbles uncomfortably between the characters' language and Barker's own, with sudden shifts from the colloquial to the literary within the same voice. Plain language is embellished with rich metaphor, adding unlikely formal contrivances to otherwise carefully un-self-conscious speech. This problem is still evident in *The Ghost Road*: "his skin had a greenish pallor, though that might be the reflection of the light from the green screens that surrounded his bed, creating a world, a rock pool full of secret life."

Still, there is a sense of deep engagement between Barker and her subject. Her exploration of mental and physical devastation shows us how estrangement and incapacity not only call into question identity, values and belief, but provoke the redefinition of morals, gender and sexuality. Throughout the trilogy, Prior and Rivers encompass this sense of disintegration, as they become more complex and ambiguous, and lead more dislocated lives. That Barker has chosen to write three books on the war suggests how much there is she wants to say. Perhaps as a consequence, Prior and Rivers are pushed to encompass her themes, and at times their characters are engulfed by the issues Barker so palpably wants to air.

Regeneration's sequel, *The Eye in the Door*, deals with the scapegoat groups of homosexuals and pacifists. Prior is stretched, at times improbably, to cohere the plot. Working for domestic intelligence, Prior is sent to trap a childhood friend who is charged with an anti-government plot. He is also revealed to be bisexual, in a vengeful, exploitative way, the background to which is only properly explained in the subsequent book. *The Eye in the Door* has an epigraph taken from *Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*, and it is Barker's depiction of Prior's increasingly split personality that is the most intriguing and successful part of this book. Otherwise, his coincidental contacts and neatly all-encompassing psyche and sexuality are hard to take.

The most rewarding volume of the trilogy is the latest, *The Ghost Road*. It probes the formative experiences of Rivers and Prior but is less talkative and less self-explaining than its predecessors. On picking up a prostitute, Prior is disturbed by memories of his own childhood abuse: "he'd begun to charge, not so much resorting to prostitution as inventing it.... First Father Mackenzie. Then others." As with the revelations about Rivers's childhood stutter and his family's uncomfortable association with Charles Dodgson (signaling questions of innocence and child sexuality), there is a frustrating sense of the characters' motives trailing a long way behind their actions. Conversely, vague references to Prior's split personality mean little to the reader without the information given in *The Eye in the Door*.

There are other challenges to writing books in sequence. Not only should each novel stand alone, but the act of reading the entire series should be rewarded with the added pleasure and understanding gained from resonance and allusion that reach back and forth between the individual works. There should be a sense of each book being a discrete but vital part of a whole. Barker's dramatic structuring across the trilogy, and her verbatim repetition of key anecdotes and analyses, annoy. In *Regeneration* Rivers concludes that "it [is] the prolonged strain, immobility and helplessness" that causes soldiers to break down. Again, in *The Eye in the Door* Rivers, we are told, "had long believed that the essential factor in war neurosis ... was the peculiarly passive, dependent and immobile nature of their experience." And in *The Ghost Road* "the whole thing was breakdown territory, as defined by Rivers. Confined space, immobility, helplessness, passivity...."

Barker can be extremely good at showing something; the problem is that she cannot resist also saying what it means, even beyond the analyses that are in keeping with Rivers's character and work. Readers are not trusted to draw conclusions or to make connections for themselves. Though this is less overt in *The Ghost Road*, such intrusions persist. For instance, when Rivers cures a patient whose shell shock has left him unable to walk, his treatment, attitude and sudden recovery are powerfully conveyed in the dialogue between the two men alone. The pleasure of such writing is then marred:

> He wasn't particularly surprised: the removal of hysterical paralysis was often—one might almost say generally—as dramatic as the onset. Moffet lay still, his face sallow against the whiteness of the pillow, making no attempt to hide his depression, and indeed why should he? His sole defense against the unbearable had been taken away and nothing put in its place.

In *The Ghost Road*, the tragicomic backdrop of Rivers's other patients is brought to the fore, and it is interesting to compare the above passage, about Moffet, with the more drawn-out story of Hallet. With fine timing and restraint, Barker traces the fate of this young soldier from his naïve enthusiasm to his grotesque injuries and slow death. Barker is at her best when she resists directing and simply observes, allowing Rivers his insight without it becoming intervention. As here, in the scene around Hallet's death bed:

> And then the girl, whose name was ... Susan, was it? She sat, twisting a handkerchief between her fingers, often with a polite, meaningless smile on her face, in the middle of the family she had been going to join and must now surely realize she would not be joining. And the boy, who was almost the most touching of all, gauche, graceless, angry with everything, his voice sometimes squeaking humiliatingly so that he blushed, at other times braying down the ward, difficult, rebellious, demanding attention, because he was afraid if he stopped behaving like this he would cry.

Prior is now engaged to his munitions-worker girlfriend Sarah Lumb. Barker uses her world to examine the effects that the war had on women's lives as they found themselves suddenly independent and out at work. For Prior, women "seemed to have changed so much during the war, to have expanded in all kinds of ways, whereas men over the same period had shrunk into a smaller and smaller space"—an impressive distinction, but one that sounds

GOOD VIBRATIONS
Friendly, informative catalogs of sex toys, books & videos. $4, applied toward first order.
1210 Valencia #NR,
San Francisco, CA 94110

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more like Barker's retrospection than any believable prescience on Prior's part. Sarah is a strong if opaque character, whom Prior tentatively associates with whatever hopes he has left of a future. In his dislocated life, he makes no connection between her and his professional experiences or other sexual encounters. Their relationship is characterized by a mixture of honesty and restraint, particularly moving given their knowledge of what is likely to come—for Prior has finally got his wish to return to France. There is no sense of liberation or hope, not least because the monolithic structures of class and gender remain.

Rivers is also facing the erosion of his aspirations and beliefs. Feverish with Spanish influenza, he is haunted by disturbing associations between the effects of the war and the death-centered culture of a group of former headhunters he studied on Eddystone Island in Melanesia. While Rivers helps soldiers come to terms with the atrocities they witness and commit, and struggles with them to find the justification that will release them from their guilt, he recalls this Melanesian society, where beliefs were so strong that the people were devoid of introspection and resolute about the more barbaric customs they practiced.

The world of these islanders is surprisingly involving and credible. There is a formality and a detachment to these passages that play down the exoticism and the symbolism they entail. We remain conscious of Rivers as a professional observer without this detracting from the emotional force of what unfolds. Elaborate rituals of death, skulls picked clean, suggest the relief and release of justification and completion. There is little of either to be found among the rotting corpses and shattered minds of the Front. But life on Eddystone Island is no less vulnerable to change; colonial repression is forcing an end to headhunting practices. So as Rivers now observes a modern society shattered by war, he remembers an ancient one for which war, killing and death were the foundations.

Rivers is a wise and compassionate man but also a man of his times, and it is interesting to compare the enlightened views that Barker gives the fictional creation with the hidebound perceptions and dubious intent suggested in the preface that the real-life Rivers wrote to his *History of Melanesian Society* in June 1914. In that preface, not quoted by Barker, he thanks two islanders who gave him much of his material, adding that

> these two men were doubtless above the average of their fellows, but their capacity shows how much might be done by the encouragement of independent industry and the preservation of such features of native culture as do not conflict with the better aspects of our civilisation.

This is not how Barker's Rivers sounds. The real-life Rivers's uneasy coupling of colonialism and anthropology mirrors his paradoxical role as an innovative therapist whose job it was to send soldiers back to the war. Barker's emphasis in her fictional version on his enlightened aspects evades properly confronting this complexity.

Regeneration is a talking book about the talking treatment, in which lengthy dialogues are studded with emphasized abstracts: "despair ... meaning ... courage ... sense ... reason ... integrity." *The Ghost Road* is altogether less emphatic, less given to bluster. It is an impressive summation, in which Barker has clearly got the measure of her characters and ideas and found the confidence to be both more ambitiously imaginative and more controlled. The diary that Prior keeps when he returns to the Front is an impressive portrayal of tension and tedium, of the overriding preoccupation not with battle but with the immediate concerns of food and sleep. Here is Prior's final diary entry:

> Patriotism honour courage vomit vomit vomit. Only the names meant anything. Mons, Loos, the Somme, Arras, Verdun, Ypres ... there's another group of words that still mean something. Little words that trip through sentences unregarded: us, them, we, they, here, there.

It is these "little words," the "us" and "them" of class, gender and convention, that are Barker's big themes. The weight of her chosen historical context pulls her insights badly out of focus at times, but the level of her questioning is impressivcly profound. In a book full of questions, the only one that is answered is why those who do not believe (Sassoon, Prior, Owen and all) continue to want to fight. The war has taken or turned upside down everything that gave them a sense of themselves, estranging them from civilian life. Perhaps the only bond left to these men is the one they have with each other.

The actual battle recounted in the closing pages of this book was just as futile and devastating as Barker conveys. With admirable judgment, she leaves us without the relief of knowing that within a week the war was over.

LAVINIA GREENLAW is the author of *Night Photograph* (Faber).

THE FUTURE OF THE WELFARE STATE

A Symposium on Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy in Memory of Michael Harrington

Friday, April 26, 9:30 A.M. - 5:30 P.M.

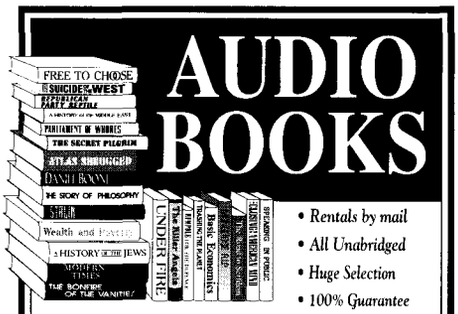
The Harold M. Proshansky Auditorium
33 West 42 Street
The Graduate Center
The City University of New York

The symposium will include panels on religion and politics, international socialism, contemporary politics, and poverty in America today. Speakers include *Norman Birnbaum, Bogdan Denitch, E.J. Dionne, Jr., Gary Dorrien, Hon. Barney Frank, Harold Meyerson, Joseph Murphy, Katherine Newman, Hon. Major Owens, Frances Fox Piven, Pierre Schori, Peter Steinfels, Tom Sugrue, and many others.*

Free and Open to the Public

For further information call
(212) 642-2684

Sponsored by the Center for the Humanities, CUNY Graduate School, with the support of Edith and Henry Everett.



BLACKSTONE AUDIO BOOKS
Dept. NE • P.O. Box 969 • Ashland OR 97520
For a FREE Catalogue, Write or Call:
1-800-729-2665

VICE PRESIDENT PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND MARKETING

Direct the Institute's public affairs and marketing activities to a variety of audiences including academia, the national media, legislators, federal, state and local policy-makers, members of the business community and public interest groups.

Responsible for increased awareness and sales of Institute publications and the ideas contained in them, and for designing implementation strategies. Five to ten years required experience in media affairs, marketing and public relations. Contact:

Sally C. Pipes, President and CEO
Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy
755 Sansome Street, Ste. 450
San Francisco, CA 94111
Tel: (415) 989-0833 • Fax: (415) 989-2411

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

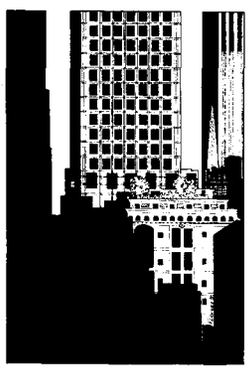
NEW YORK DIARIST

Smear tactics

THREE TIMES WITHIN THE PAST SIX weeks, my views on trade and immigration have made me the target of what can only be called the Buchanan Smear. On February 22, in a *New York Times* op-ed titled "WHAT BUCHANAN OWES CLINTON," Jagdish Bhagwati, an economist at the American Enterprise Institute, implicated the following in Pat Buchanan's half-baked protectionist program: Bill Clinton, Laura Tyson, "Rudiger Dornbusch, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist," James Fallows and "other left-of-center journalists, including Robert Kuttner of *The American Prospect* and Michael Lind and John Judis of THE NEW REPUBLIC." In the April 8 issue of this magazine, my colleague Charles Lane criticized my case for a low level of legal immigration, linking me twice with Buchanan: "As a restrictionist brief, Lind's bolster-the-little-guy argument is superficially more plausible than Pat Buchanan's raw Eurocentrism," and "At times, Lind veers dangerously close to the very Buchananism he elsewhere attacks." Most recently, in the lead editorial of the latest issue of *Reason*, the libertarian magazine, editor Virginia Postrel writes that "Buchananism" is "the ideology of *The Atlantic Monthly* and of publishing house W.W. Norton, the attitude that marks such indulgently received social critics as Kirkpatrick Sale, Alan Ehrenhalt, Jeremy Rifkin, and Michael Lind.... It was the left's golden boy, Michael Lind, not Pat Buchanan, who coined the term 'overclass' to build populist resentment against the global economy, large-scale immigration, and upwardly mobile professionals."

MANY OF US ON THE ENEMIES LIST of Bhagwati, Postrel and Lane have little in common. We do not always agree with each other on trade and immigration (James Fallows, for example, supported NAFTA; I opposed it, while supporting the deals on agriculture and services that resulted from the Uruguay round of GATT). What is more, not one has endorsed, and several have criticized, Buchanan's particular trade and immigration policies (unilateral tariffs on Chinese and Japanese goods, an immediate immigration moratorium). Politically, the accused are quite diverse—there are leftists, social democrats, an Atari Democrat and neoliberals. We share only one characteristic: we disagree with libertarians on matters of trade, immigration or both.

THE BUCHANAN SMEAR, THEN, IS an attempt by libertarians to associate liberals with a particularly noxious far-right extremist. Rudiger Dornbusch does not agree with Milton Friedman; Patrick Buchanan does not agree with Milton Friedman; ergo, Rudiger Dornbusch is a Buchananite. This accusation is a novelty since until a few years ago Patrick Buchanan's views on trade and immigration were identical to those of the free-market, open-borders wing of the Republican Party. Most conservatives claim that the very idea of restrictions in the public interest on either trade or immigration is liberal or left-wing. They're right. Take Lane's worry about my veering "dangerously close" to Buchananism because I argue that the ethnic divisions worsened by mass immigration make it more difficult to unionize the American workforce. This happens to be one argument that Buchanan has never used. Throughout the twentieth century, though, it's been a staple of pro-labor liberalism. In 1911, AFL President Samuel Gompers protested that steel manufacturers were hiring "foreigners of different nationalities, in order that there may not be free-speaking intercourse between them." David Brody, in *Steelworkers in America* (Harvard, 1960), writes: "During the 1909 strike, the Steel Corporation had advertised for non-union experienced tin workers, 'Syrians, Poles and Rumanians preferred.'" Here's how an employment agent for a nineteenth-century meat-packing plant in Chicago explained the company's search for Swedish workers: "Well you see, it is only for this week. Last week we employed Slovaks. We change about among the different nationalities and languages. It prevents them from getting together."



LONG BEFORE A NASTY NATIVISM revived on the right in the early 1990s, pro-labor liberals were calling for a crackdown on illegal immigration. As early as 1969, Senator Walter Mondale was protesting that "we have a massive poverty population coming into the country virtually every day from Mexico.... We need a rational policy to stop that hemorrhaging ... along the Texas border and along the California border...." In 1979, United Farm Workers President Cesar Chavez called on the Carter administration to arrest and deport illegal aliens being used as strikebreakers: "The companies have to depend on the importation of people from Mexico. That is what has kept farm workers from organizing in the past...." The Carter administration's policy of tougher border controls and employer sanctions was reversed by the pro-business Reagan administration. Other Democrats like Eugene McCarthy and Richard D. Lamm and TNR's own Richard Strout were making the liberal case for reducing both illegal and legal immigration at a time when Patrick J. Buchanan still agreed with *The Wall Street Journal*. My own reasoning is similar to that of the recent commission on immigration reform headed by the late Barbara Jordan. Why didn't Lane write that "Lind veers dangerously close to Jordanism?" You figure it out.

IF PERFECTLY RESPECTABLE liberal views on immigration and trade can be tainted by association with an opportunist crank like Patrick Buchanan, then Buchanan will be granted a line-item veto over the definition of liberalism. The consequences for debate, not least in this magazine, would be severe. For years, the editors and writers of THE NEW REPUBLIC have been sharp and consistent critics of racial preference policies—from a principled race-neutral liberal perspective. During the same period, affirmative action has been a wedge issue of far greater importance to Patrick Buchanan than trade or immigration. If Charles Lane can write that my liberal views on immigration are close to Buchananism, what is to deter someone from writing that Andrew Sullivan or Jeffrey Rosen or Ruth Shalit "veers dangerously close to Buchananism" in criticizing affirmative action?

WELL, NOTHING, OF COURSE, which is why so many left-liberals claim that opposition to affirmative action is fellow-traveling Buchananism. But that's hardly conducive to the kind of debate we need about that subject—and others like trade and immigration. The purpose of the Buchanan Smear is to abort such an argument. Collegial discussion within this magazine, though, should be possible. In the recent exchange in TNR between me and Robert Wright about the relative merits of liberal nationalism and liberal globalism, the distinction between principled argument and guilt-by-association was observed. The readers of TNR and *The New York Times*—perhaps even the readers of a magazine called *Reason*—deserve no less.

MICHAEL LIND

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

What Standards?

To say that the recent "Standards for the English Language Arts," miss the mark is a colossal understatement. It would be more accurate to say that they lack any real target. Like the other "national" standards that have already appeared, they were originally intended to guide states and localities in upgrading their curriculums and assessments to meet world-class standards. But good luck to anyone who tries to use the new English standards in that way!

As many critics have pointed out, the English standards are extremely vague; they offer no concrete recommendations about what students ought to learn and when. What characteristics should a good piece of writing by a fourth grader show? What critical tools should eighth graders be able to use when they read a short story or novel or watch a movie or TV program? What about graduating seniors? You could not answer any of these questions by looking at the English standards. They provide some general principles but no idea of where exactly teachers and students are going or how they will know when they have arrived.

Students are unlikely to take learning seriously if we present them with English courses based on standards like these.

Their authors would tell you that this is part of their philosophy. They do not believe that you can or should specify what students ought to learn; you need to be flexible. But these standards offer no way of telling the difference between bare competence and great distinction. Indeed, insofar as the term *standards* means "a measure of qualitative or quantitative value," they are not standards at all. And though they talk a great deal about offering equal opportunities to all students, in discarding the idea of standards, they also throw out the best hope of getting some kind of equity among our widely disparate English curriculums.

This unwillingness to say what is best for students leads to a real flabbiness about some important and controversial issues. The standards admit, rather hesitantly, that all students need to learn standard English. (They call it the "language of wider communication"—a phrase designed to keep from being disrespectful of any of the languages of "narrower" communication.) However, when it comes to bilingual education, the standards recommend keeping children "in programs that build on their first language," with English, evidently, as a sideline. This of course would ensure that many students would leave school still fluent in their native language only. In other words, English is important, but it is not important enough to make learning it the focus of the "Standards for English Language Arts"! And though the standards assume that children will learn to sound out words and use that skill, they do not explicitly recommend phonics as a necessary tool in teaching children how to read.

These deficiencies are symptomatic of a much bigger problem with the English standards. Good teachers are really part of a priesthood; they are true believers, with a passionate conviction about the overwhelming importance of the subject they teach. A music teacher probably plays several instruments; he goes to concerts as often as he can; and he undoubtedly thinks your life is blighted if you don't respond to music, too. He also has strong views about what is important for his students to know. A teacher like this is an enthusiast—others may even consider him slightly unbalanced—but students are inspired by this kind of devotion. It arouses an answering spark that shows them what learning can be like, and, often, it changes their lives.

No one reading the English standards is likely to believe that a passionate concern with English language and literature is the driving force behind them. There is no love affair with the subject matter; there is not the name of a great book or poem. In fact, the concept of "greatness" seems not to exist. Any "text" could be equal to any other, depending on what you and your students wanted to do. In the dreary wastes of abstraction and relativism that make up the English standards, you would hardly know literature exists or that anybody ever loved it.

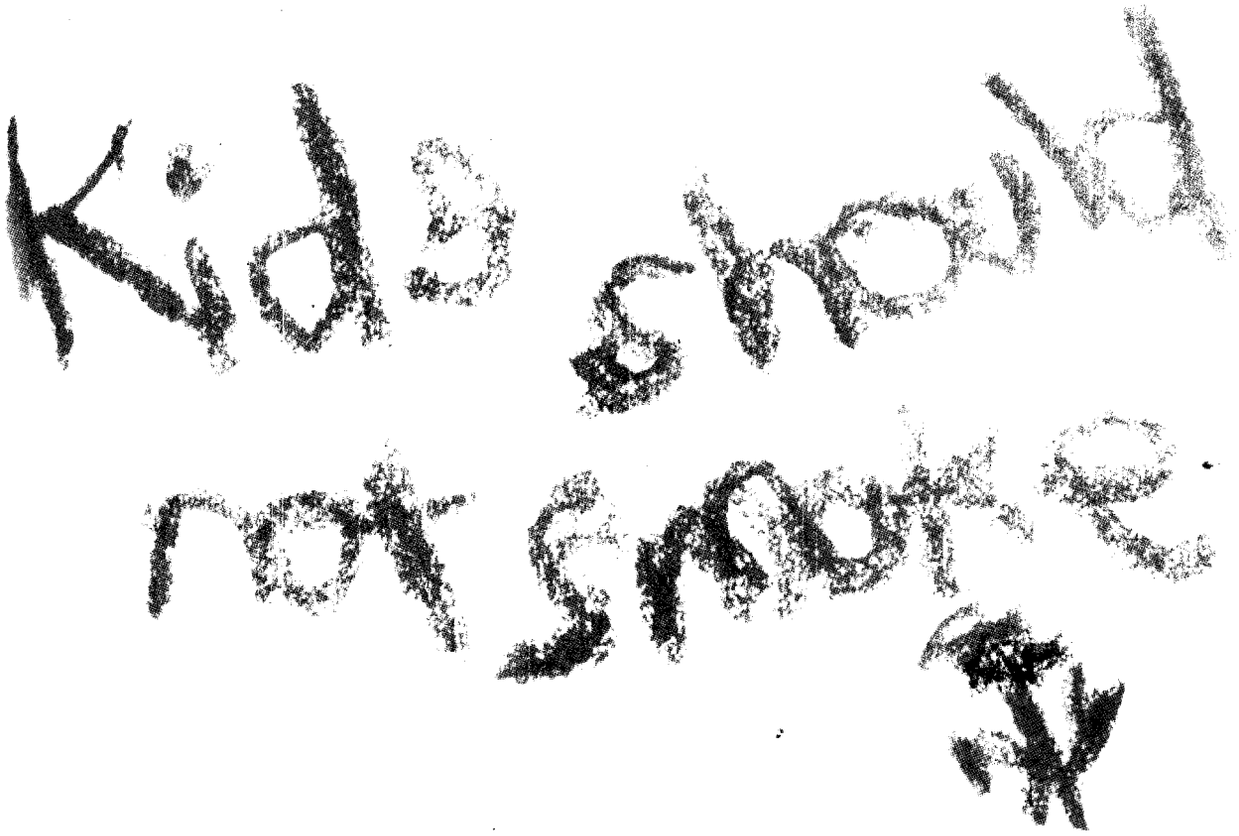
Maybe this lack of intellectual engagement is a characteristic of Americans generally. That's what the latest Public Agenda Foundation report *Given the Circumstances: Teachers Talk About Public Education Today* tells us. It says that American teachers are relatively indifferent to their subject matter and that they reflect the American public in this. Perhaps that is what we are seeing mirrored in the English standards. But a priest is not supposed to be indifferent to his calling—even if lay people are guilty of backsliding—and we cannot expect students to take learning seriously if we present them with English courses based on standards like these.

Students need real standards. They need to learn, from people who care about their subject matter, that some things are more important than others and that certain skills are essential. The English standards, for all their talk about what young people need, would serve all our students very badly.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1996 by Albert Shanker.

ADVERTISEMENT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Our position on underage smoking isn't hard to understand.

At Philip Morris USA, we don't want minors to have access to cigarettes. Minors shouldn't smoke. Period.

The question is, what are we doing about it?

We're fully committed and working hard to prevent minors from having access to cigarettes. That's the goal of our *Action Against Access* program.

For instance, we don't distribute free sample cigarettes—or send cigarettes to consumers by mail. And we're proposing that access to cigarette vending machines be restricted to adults.

We've joined with retailers, wholesalers, and other major cigarette manufacturers to support an ambitious new program which will provide stores across the country with signs and educational materials to promote awareness of minimum-age laws and the importance of checking ID.

We're also supporting the passage of state legislation to more effectively enforce minimum-age laws.

These are just some of the things we're doing to help prevent underage smoking. We don't claim that any one of them is an answer by itself.

But they all help keep cigarettes away from kids.

And that's the best way to keep kids away from cigarettes.

PHILIP MORRIS USA

Action Against Access.

© 1996 Philip Morris Inc.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED